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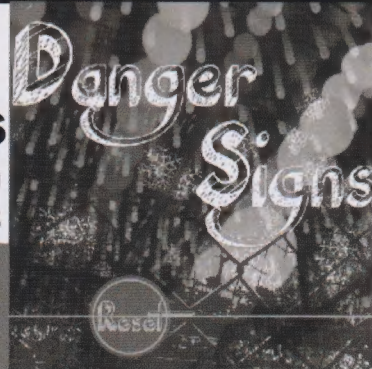


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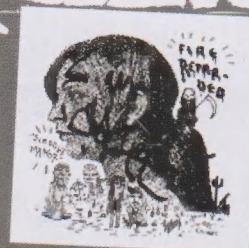
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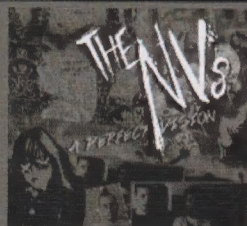


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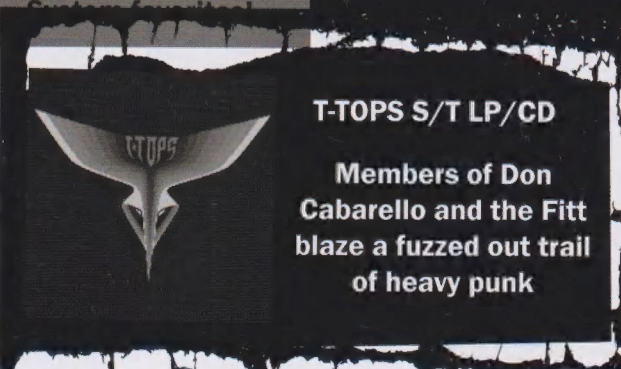


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Diversity will only improve DIY punk. If you know of a story that needs to be heard, *Razorcake's* doors are open. While we have high standards for what goes to print, everything will be considered, and feedback will be offered.

Corporate media and the internet troll-mongers can rot to death in the sinking pit of shit that they've created. We want to be proud of what we've created. We want to create something that people can be proud to be a part of.

When we act together, life can be a bit more tolerable.

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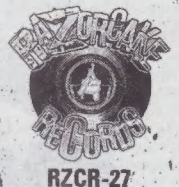
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DESIDIA

HARTO



Furious hardcore punk from 4 Razorcake staffers. Recorded by Andrew Schubert (Golden Beat),
mastered by Daniel Husayn (North London Bomb Factory). Download for free at razorcake-records.bandcamp.com

Fuck Trump

Let's just make this clear. Seriously, fuck Trump. He's a man who doesn't deal in subtlety or nuance and often contradicts himself. Trump's machine was able to convince around sixty-three million Americans to vote for him. The next four years are a total crapshoot and any idea of "social progress" on a national level looks grim. Creating a national "watch list" for Muslims, building a ridiculous wall along America's southern border, slashing taxes for the one percent, threatening the federal enforcement of *Roe v. Wade*—these are horrendous election campaign promises. Even if he can't pull off any of these digressions, he sets the tone at the highest American political level. He's a symbol that it's okay to be a bully and an asshole. I really thought we, as a nation, were turning a corner away from emboldening white supremacists.

I would like to thank science fiction—Orwell, Philip K. Dick, and Octavia Butler in particular—for preparing me for dystopian futures. When Trump announced his bid for the presidency, I took it as a serious, credible threat. I live in California. It's a state that put Reagan, a monkey-accompanied B-movie actor who was a friendly witness for the communist-baiting McCarthy hearings and Schwarzenegger, an Austrian bodybuilder actor who had a years-long affair with his family's housekeeper and fathered a child with her while still married to his wife, into public office. We're a nation that regularly mixes up fiction and non-fiction, verifiable facts with wild assertions, that muddles the first-fucking-thing-that-comes-to-mind with viable, long-term governmental policy.

I grew up largely in small, rural towns in the Southwest. I came of age during a wave of punk rock in the mid-'80s that severely distrusted institutions—both public (the government) and private (large corporations/major labels), while providing a viable alternative

with DIY. That period of time deeply informed how I continue to conduct my personal life. I have no personal social media accounts. (Razorcake does, and they are administered by our volunteers.) Instead of being a closed-off hermit, I value both the face-to-face time I spend with my friends and family, and the time I spend alone. I've taken the time to create space to think things over and look at the long views instead of blitzing myself with a continuous barrage of hyperbole-driven junk food media. (Right and left.)

I don't think people are stupid, but I do think fear is a pervasive manipulator that digs under text, words, and facts; obliterates them. People who live in fear don't want to—or need to—hear explanations or understand root causes. They want the pain to stop. They've been ignored. They want their immediate station to improve. I understand that. But this time, they voted for a sexist, racist, classist asshole who has the full ability to snip critical lines of America's safety nets and drive the nation off a cliff.

Eleven days before the election, California released the short list of viable write-in candidates. (If a voter wrote a candidate's name in on a ballot, the vote would actually be tallied.) Since California was going to fall for Clinton, I voted for Bernie Sanders. I know how the electoral college works. My civic action of casting a vote for president was merely ceremonial.

Making Razorcake for the past sixteen years isn't ceremonial. It's a deliberate act. One that is highly personal. It takes an incredible amount of energy and organization on a very limited budget. It's hard work. It's physical labor. It's also a project—and a small, living symbol—that includes some of my favorite people on the planet who are in Trump's crosshairs right at this moment.

—Todd Taylor

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"... All modern commerce is a swindle.... What he realized, and more clearly as time went on, was that money-worship has been elevated into a religion."

—George Orwell
Keep the Aspidochelone Flying

This issue is dedicated to the memory of Gwen Ifill.

THANK YOU: "That thing where people jump off of buildings and don't die?" "You mean Parkour?" (Flips to page 60.) thanks to Daryl and Robert OldHCDude for the cover layout and photos; Generations have prepared for you, Mr. Trump thanks to Bone Dust for his illo. in Donna's column; Use glowing screens to arrange and facilitate human interaction thanks to Becky Rodriguez for her illo. in Jim's column; The cottony nothingness that compromises your being thanks to Simon Sotelo for her illo. in Cassie's column; Orange Mussolini™—very, very tremendous thanks to Alex Barrett for his illo. in Norb's column; I'm a little perplexed by a three-letter word that would fill in F** F***, sure thanks to Jesse Zeroxed for his illo. in Dale's column; It is not enough to be a witness thanks to Kimberli Coldbert for making the Gritos Del Barrio logo; Fifteen-year-olds mock stage diving into the pool thanks to Danny Rust for his illo. in Chicken's column; It's not enough to just not be a jackass anymore thanks to Mitch Clem for his illo. in Jennifer's column; A decade was too long for another full-length article thanks to Chris L. Terry for One Punk's Guide to Rap Music. The realest babysitter alive approves of your illos. Art Fuentes; "Communist or communal?" Communist thanks to Craven Rock, Lauren Measure, Daniel Torres, Eric Brika, and Mike Wilson for the Sharkpact interview, layout, and photos; It's definitely a first for me—a settlist on an arm shield (hand plant on p.63) thanks to Rene Navarro, Gabbie Gonzalez, Robert OldHCDude, and Charly for the Pedal Strike interview, photos, and illos.; It's not an anti-Fur Coats thing with the name crossed out. It's their second incarnation thanks to Kevin Dunn, Paul Silver, Patrick Houdek, Marc Ruvolo, and Eric Baskauskas for The Fur Coats interview, photos, illos., and layout;

"They've nailed that weird crust/grind vocal style that sounds like an ant barking." —Ian Wise, Disvein, *Time Is No Friend* CS. Deep punk insights at the corner of poetry and reality that you won't find elsewhere. Thanks to 96's rotation of music, zines, books, and video reviewers: Theresa W., Norb, Ian Wise, Kurt Morris, Matt Average, Vince, Juan Espinosa, Kelley O'Death, Lyle, Steve Adamyk, Jon Mule, Sean Koeppenick, Indiana Laub, Paul J. Comeau, Mike Frame, Ryan Nichols, Art Ettinger, Rich Cocksedge, Matt Werts, Keith Rosson, Sal Lucci, Ty Stranglehold, Sean Arenas, Garrett Barnwell, The Lord Kveldufr, Mark Twistworthy, Kayla Greet, Billups Allen, Jimmy Alvarado, Chris Terry, Matt Seward, Tim Brooks, Jackie Rusted, MP Johnson, Chad Williams, Camille Reynolds, Jim Woster, Adrian Salas, Jim Ruland, Tricia Ramos, Craven Rock, and Jim Joyce.

DIY punk can't be fully captured, understood, or expressed by men. If you're a woman, womyn, girl, grrr, transgender/agender/non-binary/genderqueer writer who's knowledgeable about punk, punctual, and open to editorial processes, drop us a line about doing reviews, interviews, articles, or webcolumns for Razorcake. Diversity will only make us a better punk publication. Please help us out. (razorcake.org/contact)

Fuck You, Dale



L.A., 2016
Photo by Daryl

BOYCOTT AD #9



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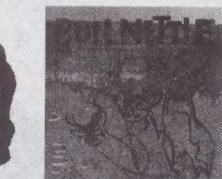
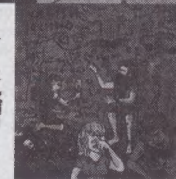
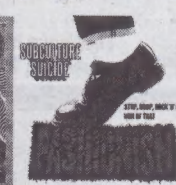
Steel Chains
S/T 7"

Accidente
Pulso LP

Brat Kings
Hypnopedia LP

Fashionism
Subculture Suicide 7"

Bad Future
S/T LP



The Stops
Nameless Faces LP

Marriage + Cancer
Killjoy 7"

Defect Defect
My Life is Like Death 7"

Turkish Techno
Number Two LP

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Control Alt Delete 7"

Divers
Achin On 7"

Bullnettle
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RAZORCAKE

Issue #96 Feb./March 2017

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The following folks stepped forward to help us do our part over the past two months. Without their help, Razorcake wouldn't be what it is.

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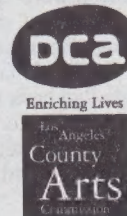
This issue is dedicated to the memory of Laila Rayyes



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NEVER LET ME FORGET DONNA RAMONE

Fighting oppressive governments seems to be part of my genetic fate.

No More Throne, No More Crown, Fuck Shit Up and Burn It Down

Fighting against oppressive governments seems to be part of my genetic fate. My mother grew up in exile and is an outspoken advocate against government oppression. My grandfather led protests that pushed for independence from Great Britain and was repeatedly jailed. My great-great-grandfather led armies that ousted the Persian rulers, liberating themselves from the Persian Empire. Yet here we go again, over a century later, as I stand up against the ruling, governing elite.

In the late 1950s, the Bahraini movement to gain independence grew. My jeddo, Mullalah Al-Ansari (my mom's father), disclaimed the British government and was an outspoken activist for Bahraini sovereignty. On several occasions, British officers raided his house. They broke down the doors of my family's home and rushed in to arrest him. My mother, only eleven, lunged at the officers, screaming and crying, worried this was the last time she would see her father alive. Unarmed and outnumbered, my family would always lose the fight. As Jeddo physically resisted, they dragged him to jail. After multiple arrests, he was given the option of prison or exile. He chose exile, and took his family to Kuwait. In 1971, when my mother was twenty-three, Bahrain gained independence from Great Britain at last. My mother and her family were finally able to return home.

I have never been to Kuwait. My mom has never wanted to visit. People may have nostalgia for the places they lived when they were younger, but not so much the places they were forced to be by foreign governments. I never knew my family had lived anywhere other than Bahrain until I had found some photos when I was twelve. I spent my summers in Bahrain, and was overly curious—and often bored—so I liked to go through everyone's things. I found a drawer of black and white photographs. A few were of Jeddo at a podium, speaking to crowds of people. Others were of my mom as a teenager, in a place that clearly wasn't Bahrain. Presenting them to my mom and aunt, I asked for explanations. Having recently been told to "go back to my country" by a boy at school in California, I was just starting to learn there was more to being a brown Muslim girl than I had been previously aware of.

Jeddo stood up and fought against unfair government rule. He was beat up and jailed for it. My mother stood up and fought against the government and grew up in exile. Both refused to stop fighting. Only a few months before finding those photos I had taken up the mantle against racism, as well as discovered punk rock. Discovering my history of discontent and activism, those new flames were doused with lighter fluid. I recognized I am three generations deep in smashing the state—and I would be remiss to not point out those systems have historically consisted of a white ruling elite.

In more recent years, during late night talks with my dad, I discovered another history of intense resistance and rebellion in his family, too. My dad's family is of a different tribal ethnic group than my mom's. Originally from Baluchistan, the Balochs have a reputation, especially in Bahrain, for being intensely righteous and loyal. People knew the Baloch made great friends and terrible enemies. The reputation dates back to the 1700s, when Commander Ahmed Murad Al-Baluchi led a Baluchi regimen of soldiers against the Persian Empire. Ahmed Murad was my great-great-grandfather, and who my dad is named after. He was head of the Baluchi tribe within the Bani Utbah, a federation of Arab clans that had united to free themselves of the Persian Empire. He was a commander in the army that removed the Persians from power in Bahrain in 1783. The Al-Khalifa tribe was put in power of Bahrain once the Persians were removed. The Baluchi and Al-Khalifa tribes were allies. Al-Khalifas later made deals with the British, which is what eventually led to Bahrain becoming a British colony. Today, the Al-Khalifa family still rules Bahrain.

In the late 1800s, the British were firmly in charge in Bahrain. Many Baluchis were in the British guard, but their loyalty lay with the Al-Khalifas. English financial advisor Charles Belgrave wrote a diary during his thirty years in Bahrain, detailing an incident from the summer of 1926. According to Belgrave's diary, Baluchi officer (and my great-second-cousin or something like that) Ismail Shah Murad shot and killed two Indian superiors, accidentally hitting the British Major Clive Daly—who he then bayoneted five times before he was arrested.

The diary entry is partially contested by several members of my family, including old timers who were alive when it happened. The story they claim is that another Baluchi officer was harassed by his Indian superior and, defending the honor of his family and tribe, shot the officer and ran. Daly commanded the other officers to capture him, so Murad shot the second officer before he could comply, then went to Daly and told him he would serve as a life-long example of what would happen to anyone who fucked with the Baluchis. Murad then either cut off or shot off Daly's ear and stabbed him several times with his bayonet for good measure. Murad was taken to court, where he was given a translator and repeatedly told to say the murders were a mistake and avoid execution. He refused, saying he would die honorably defending the name of the Baluchis. He was killed and the Baluchi officers, deemed too difficult to control, were eventually removed, demoted, or shipped to other stations.

The reason I am an American is also a product of that colonialism. My dad went to a technical high school taught by British teachers. He was trained in mechanics and engineering used in the oil fields and refineries, which were all owned by the British. When losing Bahrain as a colony, the British left. The companies were turned over to Bahrain and many of them closed. With career opportunities looking bleak, he joined his older brother living in Los Angeles. I guess coming from such a tiny island country, they decided to go as big as possible and rented a tiny apartment on Hollywood Boulevard.

After six years, my dad went back to Bahrain and married my mom. Unable to find work, they moved back to California. My dad had incredible skill and talent. He could find work anywhere he went in California, but Bahrain is small, and any businesses he could have worked for had already packed their British bags. Three years later, my mom became pregnant with me. They decided they wanted me to be a U.S. citizen (just in case living in Bahrain really was impossible) but to grow up Bahraini. After being born in California, my family flew back to Bahrain with little six-month-old Donna. My first steps, first words, and first birthday were all in Bahrain. Even as I grew from an infant into a toddler, my parents couldn't find a place to live, not even a crappy apartment,



People may have nostalgia for the places they lived when they were younger, but not so much the places they were forced to be by foreign governments.

and my dad still couldn't find steady work. So they decided to move back to California, and that's where we have been ever since.

Generation after generation of my family has been controlled and fucked over by different ruling powers, but we have never thought to quietly accept our position. When a world power had us in a chokehold, my ancestors cut off their fingers. When some dickhead tried to come after us, we scarred his face as a

message that we weren't scared. And when a woman grew up in exile because her family stood up against the oppression of a government that was not their own, she raised her daughter to stand up and fight against injustice and unfairness, no matter how powerful the persecutor.

So, hello, Trump & Co. My name is Donna, and I urge you to remember who I am. Because if you want to impose a ban on my family's ability to physically come

visit me, force anyone to register into some kind of Muslim database, and continue to ostracize, oppress, and demonize myself and others like me, I will be your loudest, angriest, most unrelenting nightmare. I am a warrior and I come from a very long ancestral line of warriors. Just try and fuck with me, or my family; I am generations strong and you don't fucking scare me.

—Donna Ramone



LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

**I was skeptical
not of the
outrage, but of
the conviction.**

On Interconnectivity

Thoughts on Resistance in the Internet Age

Throughout the month of October I read a bunch of scary stories. I read everything from horror novels to apocalyptic fiction to spooky tales. The best of the lot was a collection of ghost stories edited by Edward Gorey in 1957 and reprinted shortly after Gorey's death in 2000.

Most of the stories are set in England and I was fascinated by the portrait of Victorian England that emerged, as well as the sophistication of the psychological portraits of the men and women who unwittingly blundered into terrifying situations. It didn't really matter if the ghost was a giant rat that embodied a hanging judge or a statue that came to life once a year. I was drawn to the moment when the protagonist realized the world was very different than the one they thought they knew.

I could relate to that feeling because that's exactly how I felt the morning after the election.

*

I consume a lot of online media. I read about books. I read about music. I read about football during football season and baseball during baseball season. And during election years, I read about politics.

The bulk of my political reading, I'm not proud to admit, tends to be of the "look at this asshole" variety: portraits of Republican political figures written for left-leaning publications. I don't subscribe to these publications or have them bookmarked on my browser. Rather, I click on links that appear on my Facebook timeline and Twitter feed.

I would like to be able to tell you that I only click on links from reliable news sources, but this simply isn't true. I often click on bogus stories on bogus websites until I learn by trial and error to recognize click bait designed to outrage progressive readers like myself. I was essentially following my biases. Besides, I'm not sure the distinction between "real news" and "fake news" matters all that much in our post-truth society because so much of what I read this election season turned out not to be true. In fact, a great deal of it was absolute horseshit.

With that in mind, I was skeptical of the sorrowful posts, anguished pleas to sign petitions, and indignant solicitations to make calls to the offices of government officials that appeared on my social media

platforms. Everyone I knew was upset. That I understood. I was skeptical not of the outrage, but of the conviction that something could be done by clicking the right links.

Many people online were treating the election results like a tragedy. I know something about tragedies and one of the unequivocal truths of tragic events is that virtually everything that's reported in the immediate aftermath proves not to be true.

So I backed away from the Internet like a character in one of Edward Gorey's favorite ghost stories: I kept my distance and tried to convince myself that everything was going to be okay.

*

A few months ago I was at Razorcake headquarters, flipping through an old issue of this zine, when I saw a full-page ad that read: Never Mind the Internet Read a Zine.

The copy was done in the style of a ransom note and arranged in a way so that the Sex Pistols reference was clear (much clearer than I'm making it here). Maybe you saw it. I didn't remember seeing it when the issue first came out, and my first thought was how good it would look on a T-shirt. Daryl designed it. (Good job, Daryl!)

I've been thinking about this message a lot since the election. How, exactly, does one go about not minding the Internet in 2017?

*

Last Thanksgiving I did what so many people have expressed they'd like to do since the election: I left the country.

Don't get excited. I didn't leave for good. Nuvia and I went to Valle de Guadalupe in Baja California where her grandfather has a small rancho. It's literally right around the corner from where Nuvia and I were married almost ten years ago.

Loreto is ninety-five years old and has had a fascinating life. He was born in the mountains of Durango. The villages were distant and remote. He was a cowherd and he'd spend days out in the wild fending for himself by eating whatever fruits and plants he could find. The climate and isolation was perfect for growing poppies, but only select farmers were allowed to grow the plants that would be cultivated for the drug trade. Eventually, Loreto decided to move.

Loreto came north and made a life for himself in Baja as a dairy farmer. Nuvia has fond memories of smuggling queso fresco across the border. Today, Loreto's tiny farm has shut down but he still tends a few dozen citrus trees. He can neither read nor write but his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren live on both sides of the border, pursuing their dreams.

For me, going to the rancho has always meant disconnecting. It is a chance to turn off our phones, unplug from the Internet, and be fully present in the world. In the past, this usually meant a break from email, sports scores, and the distraction of social media.

In many ways, this visit was no different. We ate fresh baked bread, sat by the fire, and I watched Nuvia chase a baby goat.

But things have changed over the last decade that I've been going to Valle de Guadalupe. The long and rutted dirt road leading to the rancho has now been paved as part of an effort to bring more tourists to Baja's winemaking region. Nuvia and I used to walk down this road to a one-hundred-year-old Russian winery. Every once in a while a truck would labor along and chances were that whoever it was knew or was related to Nuvia's grandfather. Loreto would sit on the porch and wave at the people who honked their horn as they rumbled past, Banda blaring out of open windows.

Today, hundreds of cars go by each hour and no one waves.

This Thanksgiving, I discovered that Wi-Fi and satellite television have come to Rancho Nevarez. While I was able to resist logging on to the Internet, the lure of pro football was too much, and I happily consumed football while decorating the holiday tree, eating ham, and reading on the couch.

I'm glad that Loreto and his caregivers are connected while they're at the rancho, but it makes me a little sad to know that this seemingly remote place is every bit as haunted by Wi-Fi and satellite signals as the rest of the world.

*

"Never mind the Internet" is easy to say, but hard to do. The Internet is intertwined with mainstream life in so many ways. For many of us, we need it to do our jobs. It's how we do our banking; it's where we go for our entertainment. We use it to watch movies,



BECKY RODRIGUEZ

Change comes from community. But it begins with individuals renouncing, repudiating, and resisting injustice in deed and word.

play games, download books, and shop for things we may or may not need.

This is neither good nor bad, it is simply what it is. I don't like to use Amazon because of the way its warehouse workers are treated, but I haven't deleted my account. For the single mother of two, the regularly scheduled delivery of diapers and baby formula directly impacts the quality of her life. Who am I to judge that? Who is anyone?

Then there's social media. When I made up my mind to spend less time on social media, I'd find myself there without realizing it. How did I get here? What was I looking for?

I had no idea. I was like one of Gorey's haunted characters stuck between two worlds. I couldn't fully accept what was happening, nor could I make a clean break with the old way of doing things. I felt stuck.

*

When I was flipping through Razercake late last year I was looking for an interview with Wayne Kramer, the guitar player of the legendary Detroit proto punk band the MC5. After the MC5 flamed out, Wayne went to prison and battled drugs and alcohol. Eventually, he relocated to L.A. and started Jail Guitar Doors, a nonprofit program that gets guitars into jails and funds

music programs. He said something in that interview that has stayed with me: "I believe one person can make a difference."

How is that possible?

By resisting. We falsely remember the '60s as a time of peace and love. It wasn't. It was a time of resistance and renunciation: men and women of incredible courage renounced mass killings in Southeast Asia; the persecution of the black community; and the injustices perpetrated against the left.

These protests resulted in incredible violence. Mass beatings and arrests. Riots erupted that left dozens dead and changed cities like Detroit forever. Community leaders and political figures were assassinated.

I don't believe we are going back to those times, but there is no change without resistance. Change comes from the ground up. Change comes from community. But it begins with individuals renouncing, repudiating, and resisting injustice in deed and word. I think of the courage it took to join a protest in 1965 knowing the cops might kill you. I think of the courage it took for Loreto to pack up and leave everything he knew and start over.

As punks, resisting the status quo is what we do. It's our knee-jerk response to the world. But before I can "take it to the streets," the first thing I need to do is resist

the allure of the Internet. I need to resist the validation that comes from having one's opinions approved and biases confirmed via carefully curated social media platforms. I need to look at how I'm using the tools of mass distraction and evaluate if my aims and ambitions as an artist, community member, and citizen are being frustrated or achieved. I need to be vigilant of how my social media consumption is making money for advertisers. I need to remember that every click is a consumer choice and that the axiom "be the change you want to see in the world" also applies to the Internet.

I don't want to tell anyone how to use social media, nor am I advocating for abandoning it. I want to hear your stories. I want to see the art you create, listen to the music you make, share the experiences you have in the world. I want that more than ever. We are going to need each other these next four years. Our art, our community, our noise have never been more essential. For better or worse, a lot of that lives in the great seething mass of online content, which now includes a video of my wife chasing a baby goat around a dusty rancho kissed by the sun.

—Jim Ruland

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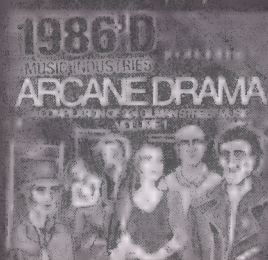
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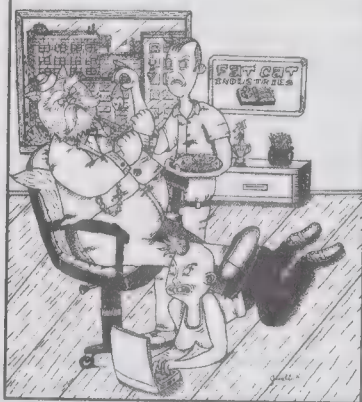
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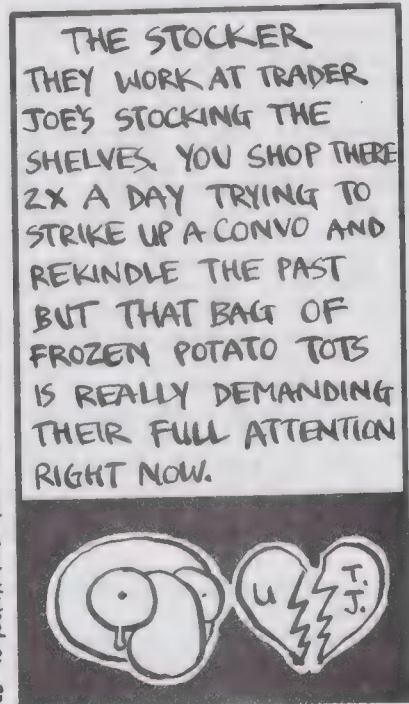
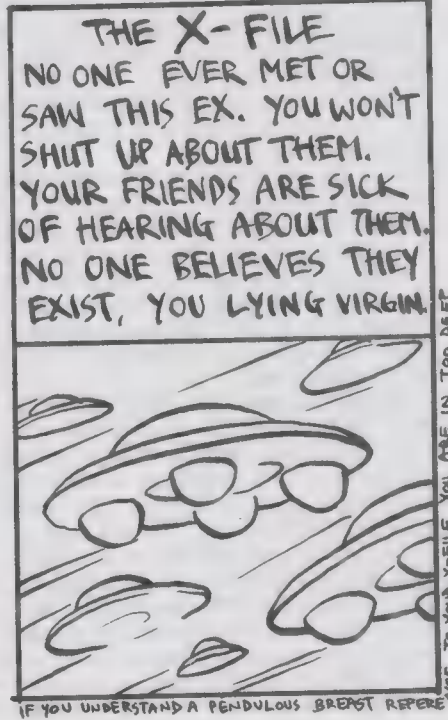
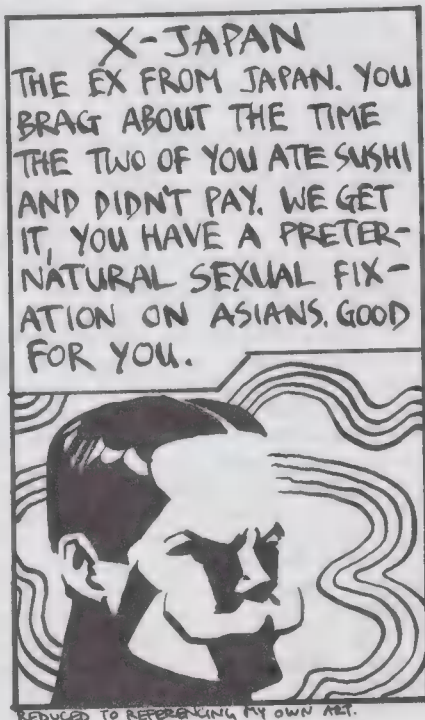
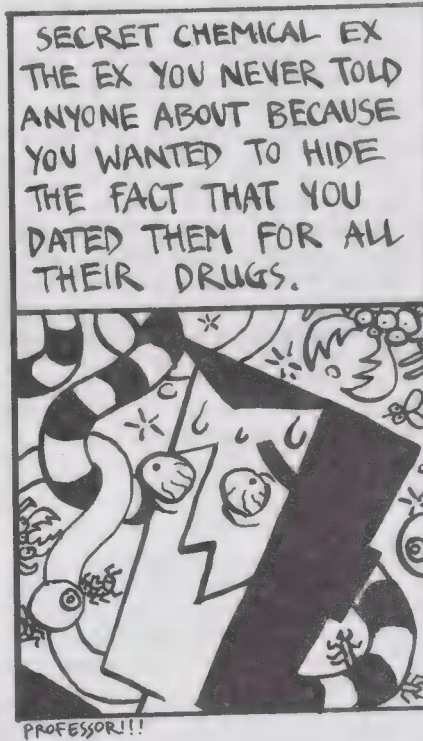
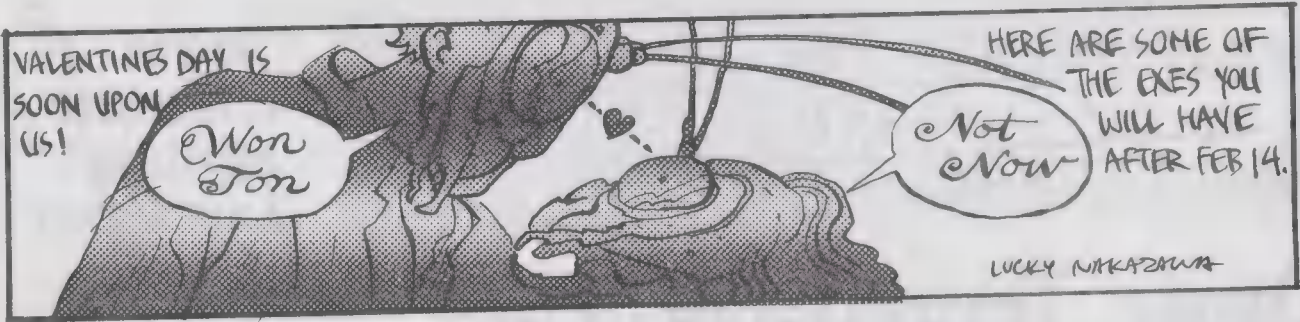


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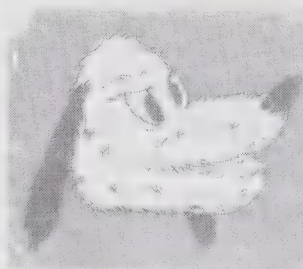


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RAZORCAKE 11



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CASSIE J. SNEIDER

**"Do you
remember
anything?"
Laura asked.**

Deer Toyota (Part 2)

I took more Excedrin when we got to Denver. We arrived just as I had calculated, two hours before the Dwarves show. We were staying with Laura's friend in a big house in a nice neighborhood with lots of lawn ornaments and brick driveways, markers by which Long Islanders judge their surroundings. People are high class when they have birdbaths and masonry, and more on my level when they have life-sized deer and asphalt driveways.

My headache got worse. I could hear the blood in my brain thudding and slowing everything into a blur. Evergreens. Fountains. Thick green lawns. *Put down your bags. Do you want anything to drink? The guest shower is upstairs to your left.*

I left Pug at the house where we were staying, not thinking about his dog anxiety over whether The Human would come back. I took more Excedrin before we drove to the show in separate cars, Jessica and me in the Toyota with Laura and her friend in a different car. I don't remember getting to the venue, but I remember running into Dwarves guitarist Marc on the street outside of the club. I had been the front-row face of every East Coast show since I was twenty. The band knew me and I knew them, but my enthusiasm hadn't yet taken me into the Rockies during an apocalyptic false alarm.

"Cassie J. Snider! What the hell are you doing in Colorado?"

I handed him a comic, and there were thirty-nine left. Everything got hazy around the edges, and when Marc walked me over to the singer, Blag, their voices had reverb. We talked, but I don't remember what about, maybe the after-party, how far I'd driven, where I was living. My heart sped up and my brain ground to a halt. The opening band finished. I stood with Jessica and Laura in the darkened theater. The Dwarves went on and Blag said my name during a song, but it sounded like someone was holding a seashell to both of my ears. We lost Laura, swirling in the pit behind me, and a black hole opened up, sucking in all the light, the sound, me.

**

Pug gave up hope The Human was ever coming back.

The Human would never again feed him carrots and tell him he was the best-looking Pug in show business. Pug would never ride up front in the red thing with wheels with

the glass down and the wind pulling his face back, waking up in some other place with only smells to tell him where he was.

Pug thought about The Human, gone now for an hour. He thought about The Human's voice, the way her hands looked when they opened the refrigerator door. He thought about how often she dropped food, and how they would sometimes sit in the red thing with wheels eating ice cream and how The Human not only didn't mind sharing ice cream with Pug but also sometimes bought him his own cone.

Pug looked at the New Human, a bald man in a recliner watching TV and drinking beer, petting a white dog with long hair.

Pug threw up.

**

Imagine yourself outside of the design of your life. You have stepped out of the blueprint into something soft and unfamiliar, like interactive Cinemax pornography: fuzzy, confusing, and you don't know where your hands should go.

Now, imagine yourself as a cotton ball. You have no hands or legs and no way to feel your way around your new, unfamiliar world. There is only darkness, the black world of nightmares, the cottony nothingness that comprises your being, and a sense of urgency that you must find a way to roll over and crawl toward whatever is vomiting on you in the darkness.

I woke up from the Excedrin coma unable to determine my reality from an alternate reality wherein I had fallen asleep in a windowless black hole. The Pug was no longer an animal, but a concept of urgent responsibility vomiting somewhere in the void. In order to fulfill this responsibility, I would have to find it in my formless being to roll off of the couch.

Everything was black, though I did not know whether or not I possessed eyes, so the blackness was almost irrelevant. I stared into the void for a long time, not knowing what the first step to rolling was. I fell to the floor like a newborn foal, confused, still not able to use my legs, and with an after-birthly disgustingness that had been yakked on my blanket. The caffeine from the Excedrin gave my brain the hyper alertness of a crackhead. I was experiencing great realizations that I was not capable of understanding, and I could not place who or where I was. It was how

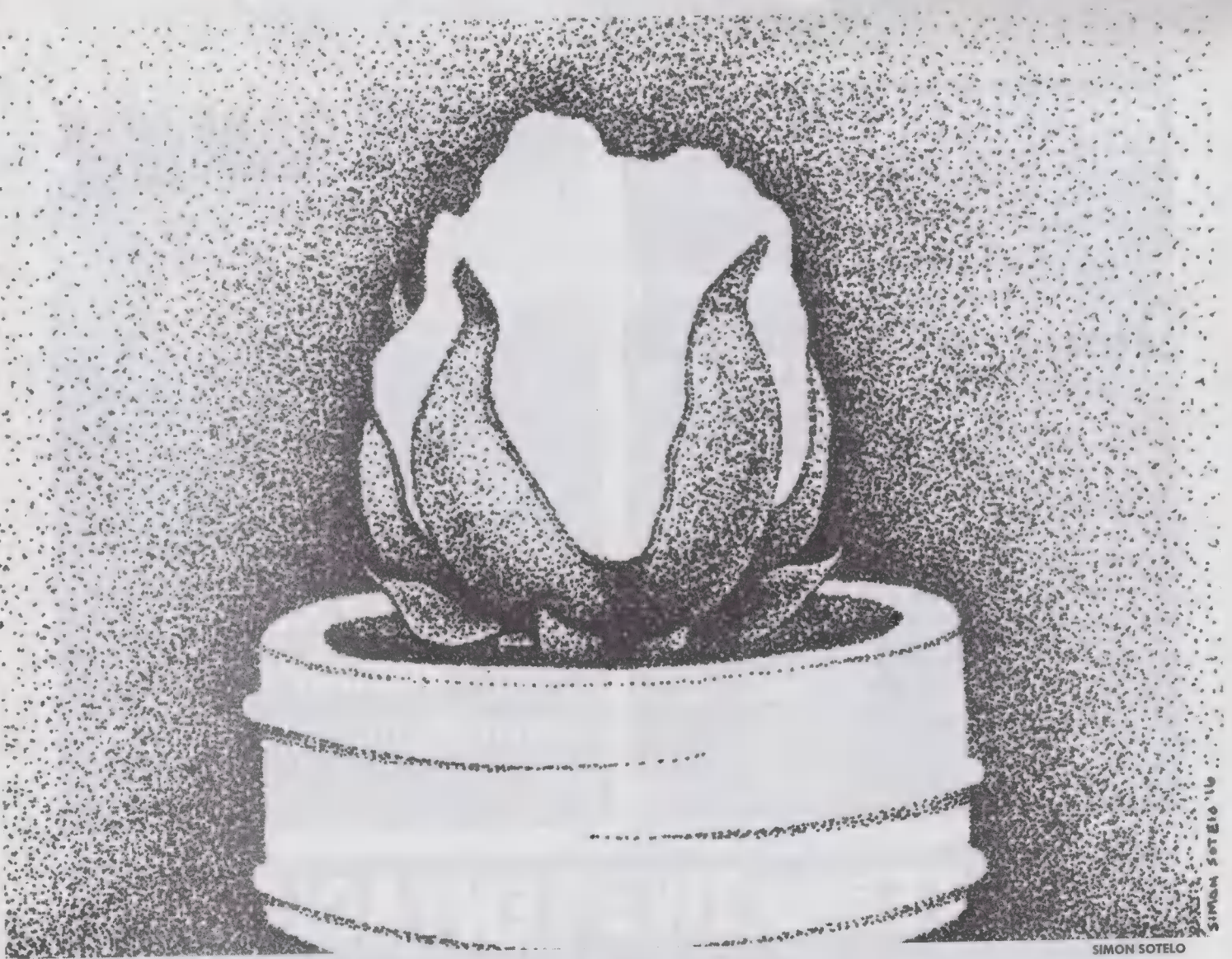
I imagine fish must feel, not knowing what water is but feeling they must navigate it with a certainty and keenness their existence depended upon. I landed on plush, beige wall-to-wall carpeting, but in the darkness of my overloaded brain, I had fallen upon spongy craters on the dark side of the moon. The Pug, still only an idea, jumped off the couch when I landed and continued to dry heave somewhere in my nightmare. I knew I had to find my way out, swim to the surface, and find the mouth of the cave. I found my sea legs and crawled off in search of our escape.

I didn't know where the door to the basement was, though what I was looking for in my blind fight for survival was more of an exit hole or a crack of light beaming from another world into mine. Instead, I found myself under a glass-top dining room table. If someone had shined a light on me at that moment, maybe a playful god-hand out of the *Twilight Zone*, they would have seen me under this table, groping the wall for a door knob, crying real tears, shaking from tremorous uppers, listening to the Pug throw up and eat it over and over again. I was there for anywhere between twenty minutes and three hours before I got it together enough to crawl across the floor to a doorway and then a staircase and then the dim twilight of a family den. The Pug followed me up the stairs, steadfast in his dedication to me as his human and, again, to the task of eating his own vomit.

I ended up outside in a blue-gray dawning morning. Unfortunately for me, the door locked behind me as I crawled on all fours onto the lawn, in my underwear, wrapped in a puked-on blanket, trailing a pug. I clawed at the door, weighing quickly the option of reentry versus sleeping nearly naked on a stranger's lawn. Then I fell asleep.

When I woke up in the morning, I was in a basement. Jessica was still asleep in the bed on the other side of the room. I was naked in a blanket and crusty with something that looked like puke. The Pug was at the far end of the couch, snoring.

I walked up the carpeted stairs to the den. Laura was watching the morning news, wearing the same wifebeater and black jeans she had on the day before. Everything looked vaguely familiar in a way it shouldn't as though, in my sleep, I had taken inventory of a stranger's kitchen and wood-paneled rec room. I looked around at my surroundings, picking up bits and pieces of memory—a Swiffer for my own bad dreams.



SIMON SOTELO

“There was no light, and I was thrown up on.” It was all flooding back, and it was terrifying.

Laura noticed me standing in the kitchen, picking up the empty bottle of Excedrin, shaking it like a broken maraca. “I found you on the lawn this morning and let you in. What were you doing?” I spun around, taking stock of the beige carpet, the bowl of dog water, the glass patio door. I retraced my steps downstairs. I looked at the kitchen table and felt a shiver of claustrophobia. Laura followed behind me. “You were in your underwear, laying on a blanket. What happened to you?”

“I... I think I had some kind of break from reality.”

“How much headache medicine did you take?”

I counted the pills in my head. “Too many,” I determined.

“How many is too many?”

“Seventeen. I think. Maybe twenty.” I looked at the table again, then the door, then the table. “I think I might have been trapped under there.” I thought about it. “For hours.”

“Under where?”

“The table. I thought it was the way, and I needed to reach the light.”

Jessica stretched and sat up. “What are you guys talking about?”

“I remember crying.” I looked at Jessica, speaking with the tone of someone who was the victim of a violent crime. “Didn’t you hear me crying?”

“No. Slept like a baby.”

“There was no light, and I was thrown up on.” It was all flooding back, and it was terrifying.

“Do you remember anything?” Laura asked.

“Sensations. Standing outside of the club handing out comics. Laying my head next to the omelet at the diner. I don’t know how I ended up in the basement, though—or where my clothes went, or why I would take them off and drag myself outside in my underwear.”

Jessica stood up from the daybed and dusted her hands on her jean shorts.

“Cass, I don’t think we’ll get to the bottom of this any day soon.”

—Cassie J. Sneider

(Stay tuned for the dramatic conclusion of Deer Toyota in the next Razorcake!)



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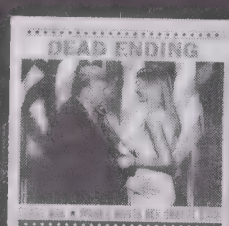
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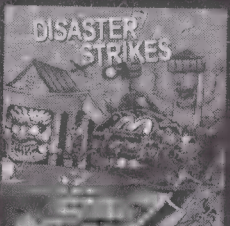
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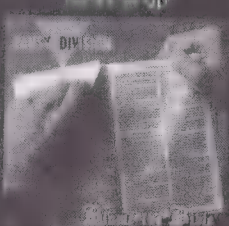
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College kids are suddenly visibly young.

why are there so many middle-schoolers in Davis Sq?

I'm pretty sure those are Tufts students.



Going through airport security with a tape deck purchased on vacation, I had a sobering interaction:

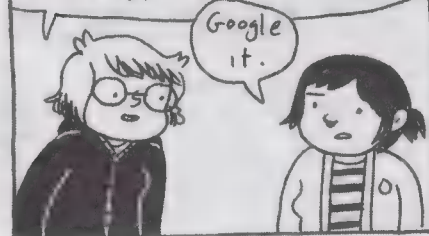


y'know, like cassettes? They play music?



I still ask questions instead of immediately googling for the answer.

Hey, if I'm gonna make beets, how long should I roast them.



I dunno, I'd rather have an interaction with someone.



LIZ PRINCE
24 mins ago

Does anyone know how long I should roast beets for?



LIKE

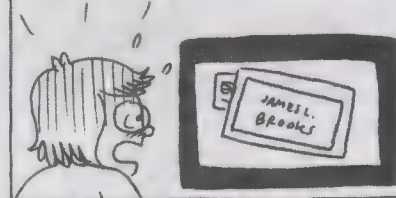


COMMENT



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But perhaps the most up-setting sign that I'm getting older is how distract I was when The Simpsons updated their opening sequence to have a flatscreen TV.



I miss old, clunky technology, dammit!



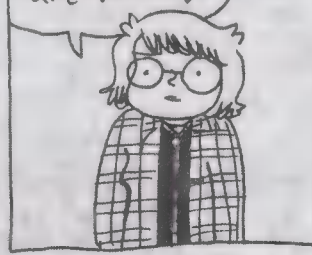
I know that every generation goes through this.

Am I out of touch?

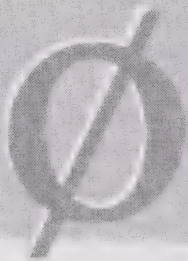


I guess you're not "old" unless it bothers you.

No, it's the children who are wrong.



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TOP 50 REASONS WHY A TRUMP PRESIDENCY WILL BE A RIGHT JOLLY TIME

Like every human on the planet not named "Vladimir," I am anguished, vexed and aghast re: America's indefensible choice of Orange Mussolini™ as our new pimp. And, also like everyone else, I realize that there is absolutely nothing I can say that hasn't already been said about this odious toad—and, even more maddeningly, there is apparently absolutely nothing that CAN be said about this foul schnook that will make Jot and/or Tittle One of difference to the members of his cult. You could haul out security cam footage of Orange Mussolini™ (a division of Trump Enterprises®) abducting unsupervised ten-year-old-boys from the hallways of Trump© hotels, amputating their genitals, catheterizing them with Krazy Straws®, burying them up to their necks in the Arizona desert sand until their wounds heal or they die, and selling them, for the average price of ■ well-tempered Boston Terrier, as eunuch slaves to maharajahs and/or morally ambivalent choir directors—with his identity confirmed each step of the way by biometric time clocks—and his supporters would do little more than howl about liberal bias in the media and that kidnapping and castrating ten-year-old-boys and selling them into slavery is just what hotel owners do, why are you trying to make such a big deal out of it? Had you previous doubts, it has now been confirmed: THIS IS THE DUMBEST FUCKING NATION ON EARTH, EVER. *My teeth grind at night like cement mixers! My guts are knotted in ■ poop sausage of bile and vinegar!* And there is ABSOLUTELY NOTHING I CAN SAY HERE that hasn't already been kicked to death (metaphorically—I suspect they'll be saving the literal kickings-to-death for after the coronation)—nothing but more of the same impotent venting that I suppose we'll all continue to perpetrate until the OrangeShirts™ (a division of Trump Enterprises®) kick down our doors and compel ■ to engage in one-man castor oil chugging contests as aromatic reminders to keep our unfair liberal bias to ourselves. So fuck it. Why fight it? *I'm rolling with the punches from here on in, Daddy-O!* Like our beloved President Alfred E. Neuman said, "WHAT, ME WORRY?" I want to fit in! I want to be one of the guys, perfuming the locker room with my manly musk of

privilege and entitlement! Thus do I proudly and jackbootedly march into this bold new future with a breezy manifesto I call...

TOP 50 REASONS WHY A TRUMP PRESIDENCY WILL BE A RIGHT JOLLY TIME

1. Orange is the new Black.
2. Orange Mussolini™ will make the best White House® Santa since Barbara Bush.
3. One thing you can say about billionaires: You KNOW they're always looking out for the little guy.
4. Trump is going to build a wall so big that even he can't ship his jobs to China anymore.
5. Eating at ■ Mexican restaurant without smashing a plate, calling the waitstaff a bunch of insulting names, and running out on the check is now a radical act of rebellion. *Yes! I am a notable revolutionary! Pass the chips!*
6. My level of concern over a potential Cowboys-Patriots Super Bowl™ matchup has really plummeted over the course of the last month.
7. Come on, when's the last time you even listened to "Racism Sucks" by 7 Seconds, let alone got into it?
8. "Russia, the world's sole remaining superpower" has a really nice ring to it.
9. Fidel Castro said he wouldn't die until America was destroyed. Two weeks after Trump® was elected, he died. *Ha! Take that!*
10. I knew there was a good reason for not using Twitter.
11. I was really sick of all those doctors and scientists emigrating to the United States. With all the money the Republicans will surely be pumping into our already top-notch school system, we'll be spitting out a legion of home-grown geniuses in jig-time!
12. "Ruble" is really fun to say.
13. If Orange Mussolini™ claims something is the case—say, widespread voter fraud—then it's absolutely true unless the liberal media can prove it isn't. Therefore, if Orange Mussolini™ says the moon's core is made out of the Tootsie Roll® center of a Tootsie Pop®, then that is, in fact, the case, unless the media can prove otherwise. Having the moon be ■ big Tootsie Pop Drop® in the sky would be rad! MAKE IT SO, GREAT LEADER! MAKE IT SO!

14. Lights out in homosexual work camps has just gotta be *wild*.

15. I assume that after the thing about Hillary's thirty thousand emails missing from ■ private email server gets sorted out, they'll turn their attentions to the twenty-two MILLION emails missing from the private email server in the White House® during the George W. Bush presidency. *Now we can catch the REAL killers!*

16. The little girls participating in the White House® egg hunt this year are gonna be WAY hotter than last year's. WAY hotter.

17. The guy in charge of building the Dakota Access Pipeline says he's sure Orange Mussolini™ is gonna get rid of the protesters for him, because he already paid him off to do so. Well, haven't you ever been caught in the rain before? *Water is annoying!*

18. America can be counted on for exactly two things: Starting wars we can't finish, and kissing rich men's asses in the off chance some tasty crumbs tumble out. This presidency plays right to our twin strengths! *A veritable Reese's® Peanut Butter Cup of cultural excellence!*

19. Those uppity senior citizens were getting a bit too fucking big for their britches, if you ask me.

20. I hate tourists anyway.

21. What's all this talk about minorities not getting represented? Republican Presidential candidates have only won the popular vote ONCE in the last seven Presidential elections! Our government is RUN by ■ minority!

22. You'll never hear your wife piss and moan about how she could have married the guy who made a fortune selling "DON'T BLAME ME—I VOTED FOR JILL STEIN" bumper stickers again.

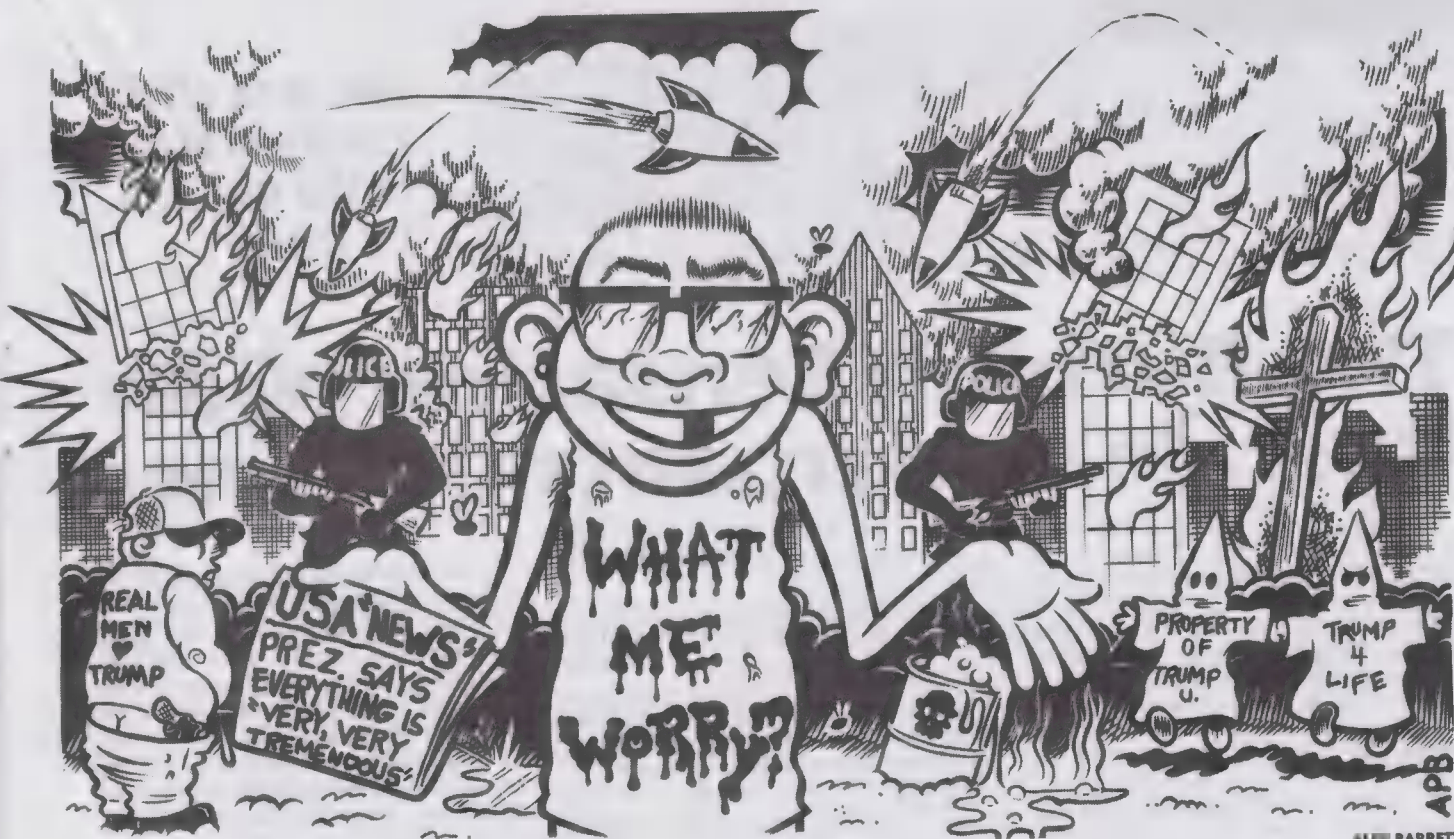
23. Admit it—you forgot how good that first TSOL record sounded, didn'tcha?

24. Dude will look really spiffy on a fifty-cent piece.

25. If you keep saying "I, for one, welcome living in a racist police state" in ■ Kent Brockman voice around your Republican co-workers enough times, eventually it will aggravate the living shit out of them.

26. Safety pins are cool again!

27. This whole Trump® University™ thing is making those of us with degrees from ITT-Tech feel slightly less pathetic.



#MakeAmericaASackofMalignantTurnipswithPoopOnThemAgain

28. The pattern for Republican presidencies usually goes Major Terrorist Attack, Senseless War, Total Economic Collapse. Orange Mussolini™ is a maverick, though! A real wild card! *This* time, it might go Total Economic Collapse, Senseless War, Major Terrorist Attack! *The suspense and bold innovation is killing me!*

29. Admit it, your level of personal concern about repaying your student loans has dwindled appreciably these days.

30. Dude's head fits the contours of a dartboard almost perfectly!

31. The money you paid for that passport sure the hell looks like a good investment in retrospect, doesn't it?

32. It's always good to see Hedonismbot from *Futurama* working again!

33. Okay, sure—we're all fucked. But if he starts giving press conferences dressed in a toga and a Corona Radiata, with a violin, that is going to be fucking HILARIOUS.

34. Well, aren't you sick of all that non-stop twenty-four-hour coverage the media is continually lavishing on the water protectors at the Dakota Access Pipeline? [pause] [additional pause] ...jeez, tough room.

35. Well, if the shock to one's system incipient in sitting in a sauna in the woods and then bolting out the door and turning somersaults in the snow confers all the health benefits that its hearty northwoods adherents say it does, then the shock to one's system resulting from going from idly thinking that Bernie Sanders *just might* have an outside chance at the Presidency to the reality of Orange Mussolini™ being in

charge should probably ensure we all live to be about two hundred.

36. Do you think Russia will have better tacos than the U.S.? Asking for a friend.

37. I bet you never thought you'd see the day when America became a fascist state AND a Russian satellite back in high school civics class, didja? Admit it, you didn't even think that combination was possible! One can do little but cede points for originality.

38. I have it on good authority that the kids in the playground are already calling him "Donald Dump," so his legacy is already pre-cemented with the youth.

39. It's gonna be touch and go for a little while, but when that Tribble on his head starts reproducing, this madcap romp will really round into form!

40. I've always wanted to be governed by a sack of malignant turnips with poop on them, haven't you?

#MakeAmericaASackOfMalignant TurnipsWithPoopOnThemAgain

41. Christ, at least it isn't whoever the hell does that whistling song that's always on the radio.

42. Don't act so shocked that a *Dick Tracy* villain got elected President! There's precedent! We elected Pruneface in 1980, didn't we?

43. Now that I know that you can be President without having even the most basic of qualifications, resume writing is gonna be a fucking breeze from this point forward.

44. Orange Mussolini™ is going to give us all a pony. *And make the Canadians pay for it!*

45. Well, in a country where shaking one's fist and cursing foreigners for threatening one's way of life is considered an appropriate reaction when an American born in America buys an American-made assault rifle designed for the American military and walks into an American bar in America and murders forty-nine other Americans, using logic of any sort would clearly destroy the entire social fabric, wouldn't it?

46. If you enjoyed the crushed looks on your children's faces when they finally realized that Santa wasn't going to bring them their fucking Hatchimals® this year, imagine the rapt delight to which you'll thrill when you watch it finally dawn on these cretinous toads that they're not getting their wall, that Hillary Clinton isn't going to be locked up in the Tower of London, and that the free pony was bullshit, too.

47. You can now piss off the alt-right by eating Kellogg's™ Pop-Tarts®. BEST. REVOLUTION. EVER.

48. Jesus fucking Christ, at least we don't have to listen to those people whining about Hillary's emails for the next four years. Seriously. *Seriously.*

49. "Donald Trump" is an anagram for "Damp Lord Nut." Okay, that kind of rules.

50. Come on, you know they were all having a blast the day they hung Mussolini from the street light.

Love,
—Damp Lord Nerb

I'M AGAINST IT

DESIGNATED DALE

Bad rock'n'roll karma is some of the worst of its kind.

The Burning Sensation of an Upscale Underpants Designer

When punk rock reared its head in the 1970s, the many parties involved cite the crappiness of rock'n'roll as a whole as the reason for their reaction. The general state of what was happening mentally and politically worldwide was reflected in thousands of songs from punk bands. This is still the case today.

The more I've talked with artists and participants from that crucial wave of output from the '70s, the more I hear these folks explain that nothing produced at that time—records, zines, flyers, photographs, et cetera—were seen as future investment worthy of any monetary value. They're right. Records were pressed solely for listening and trading. Zines kept all of the punker tribes in the loop. Flyers were the way you got the word out about your upcoming gigs. Photographs were important for all the above. But actual monetary worth? Hell, a majority of the music industry didn't think punk was going to last, let alone be of any worth to anyone involved. Yet, here we are over forty years later, still hammering it out.

Some of the most coveted punk rock artifacts remain from the 1970s. What were considered tools of the trade to the punkers of the '70s have become cherished keepsakes to a number of people, with the ages of these people ranging decades apart from each other. As time goes on, the rarer these keepsakes become. You don't have to be a math magician to figure out the more rare certain artifacts are, the more expensive they become. It's usually good for fans to buy from other fans, because (hopefully) they're not going to rape each other for exorbitant amounts of cash. This usually happens on the retail side of collecting, and while I'm all for mom and pop stores, there are always a few rotten beans that foul the burrito (thought I was gonna use the apple analogy, didn't you?). Yes, even in punk rock, there are opportunist fuckfaces looking to fleece, but word usually gets out about their shady shenanigans—and rightly so. People who know me know how big the space is in my heart when it comes to the Ramones. I've built up a small museum in their name over the years, but let's not get it twisted: I would never, ever fuck someone over to make money, especially a member of the familia. Bad rock'n'roll karma is some of the worst of

its kind, and any of you rotten bastards have what's coming to you.

And speaking of fuckfaces, hello Joseph Corr . For those of you who don't know who he is, Joseph is the son of Vivienne Westwood and the late Malcolm McLaren. McLaren opened a clothing boutique in the U.K. in the early '70s, where he had knocked boots with Westwood, another clothing designer. They had Joseph a few years prior, before McLaren got the Sex Pistols rolling as their manager. Fast forward to 2010: McLaren succumbed to mesothelioma and his entire estate was left to his long-time girlfriend of twelve years. Corr  and his father had a bad relationship their entire lives. The bitter Joseph tried to wrangle his way into his father's estate, but the courts denied his contesting. It wasn't as if Corr  was living hand to mouth during this time of being assed out on his old man's will. Joseph had started a very successful lingerie company, Agent Provocateur, with his then-wife back in 1994. The estate ruling was obviously salt rubbed into the wound.

Corr  claimed he had sold his personal collection of his parents' designs of punk-related clothing and other rare Pistols-related swag, including a one-of-a-kind acetate pressing of the Sex Pistols 1976 debut *Anarchy in the UK* single on EMI, to raise money for charities in the past, only to buy it all back again once Agent Provocateur took off like wildfire. Expressing his disdain for the Punk London festival that took place in London all of 2016 to celebrate the forty years of influence the punk culture had on the city, Corr  announced in *NME* that he would publicly burn his entire collection in protest of the festival, on the anniversary date of said Pistols debut single, November 26:

"The Queen giving 2016, the Year of Punk, her official blessing is the most frightening thing I've ever heard. Talk about alternative and punk culture being appropriated by the mainstream. Rather than a movement for change, punk has become like a fucking museum piece or a tribute act. A general malaise has now set in amongst the British public. People are feeling numb. And with numbness comes complacency. People don't feel they have a voice anymore. The most dangerous thing is that they have stopped fighting for what they believe in. They have given up the chase. We need to explode all the shit once more."

I can't exactly put my finger on "all the shit" he's talking about, but he's obviously not paying attention to what's been going on in worldwide, truly independent punk all these past years since his daddy managed the Sex Pistols. Many things happened and are happening below the surface, which include but aren't restricted to recording, touring, and promoting one hundred percent off of the major mainstream grid (including *Razorcake*). And as far as any "appropriation" goes, every single official Pistols vinyl release came from a major label, so he really needs to pump the brakes with "all that shit" right there and put a sock in it. Or in his case, shove a piece of over-priced lingerie in his blowhole. But he goes on:

"People are more interested in the monetary value of these things that are going to get burnt, than what it is and what it means—it's a statement. It's about saying these artifacts in themselves don't have value. I'm burning a load of Seditionaries (the boutique run by McLaren and Westwood) clothes and stuff that's actually my family heritage, but at the same time, what was great about punk rock was that you didn't need any clothes. All you needed was a packet of safety pins. You talk to people about it these days and it's almost like Antiques Roadshow. 'I wish I kept those bondage trousers, they'd be worth a fortune now'. What's that got to do with anything? That's why I think it's appropriate to say punk rock is extinct. Otherwise, it's all going to end up in some tourist shop, in a glass case, like the Hard Rock Caf  or something, and they'll be selling 'God Save The Queen' mugs with a safety pin through her nose at Buckingham Palace."

I find it hard to believe there aren't any people, just from the museum collection alone, over in England who wouldn't hesitate to set up an exhibit that would travel around Europe, showcasing the history behind London's impact on the fashion sense of a shit ton of punkers (even though McLaren took Richard Hell's look while visiting NYC, got super inspired, and ran with it all the way back to his SEX shop on King's Road. Let's keep it real, folks). Corr  is so hell bent that everyone is only concerned about turning a profit when it comes to punk rock that he doesn't see the genuine impact



JESSEE ZEROXED

Is Punk London a corporate affair?

It totally looks as though it is, but that doesn't mean you have to light a fucking fire in response to art from a culture's past.

it's had on generations over the years. Not everyone is a self-indulgent arse, Joseph. There are those among you who still hold it in very high regard—in a regard that doesn't put money first. Is *Punk London* a corporate affair? It totally looks as though it is, but that doesn't mean you have to light a fucking fire in response to art from a culture's past. You can, absolutely, but it's a asshole move, Sir Sphincter. I also find it ironic he said back then you didn't need any clothes, just a packet of safety pins, and he's right. But what kind of shop did his parents run, again? Honky, please.

My first reaction to this burning was: "Well, he supposedly gave to charities before. Why is he being such a cock? Auction it all off and write it off to children's charities or whatever it is that gets him off." Nope:

"Whatever I do with this isn't going to change anything. Why don't they take all the money they're spending on this fucking year of punk and give it to the homeless? Why doesn't the Queen or the British tourist board give the money to the homeless? It's time we question what we think of value."

So, his money won't do any good, but others' will. That makes total fucking sense.

I think it's time we question the value of this businessman's judgment, 'cause I think his panties are on too tight.

I can't believe I'm saying this, but I echo John Lydon's sentiment to all this horseshittery:

"If you're going to destroy £5 million (over six million U.S. dollars) worth of anything, isn't it better to sell it and give the money to charity? You selfish fucking lingerie expert. Why don't you burn your own bra?"

—Designated Dale
designateddale@yahoo.com



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Dan Monick's Photo Page
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THE FREE / WEEKLY / SHIT TALKING / PUNK PODCAST
HOSTED BY JOEY STEEL



WE ARE WHAT WE PUT IN OUR HEADS.
CAPITALIST CULTURE INFECTS OUR MINDS
MADE IN KNOW-NOTHING U.S.A.
BUT WE DON'T WANT TO ESCAPE IT.
WE WANT TO DESTROY IT.

EVERY WEEK WE FIND THE BEST VOICES IN THE
UNDERGROUND BUILDING IT BRICK BY BRICK.
WE BREAK SHIT DOWN WITH THEM & TALK ABOUT HOW
WE CAN BUILD A WORLD WE'D HAVE A BLAST IN.

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SIMIO
#59**

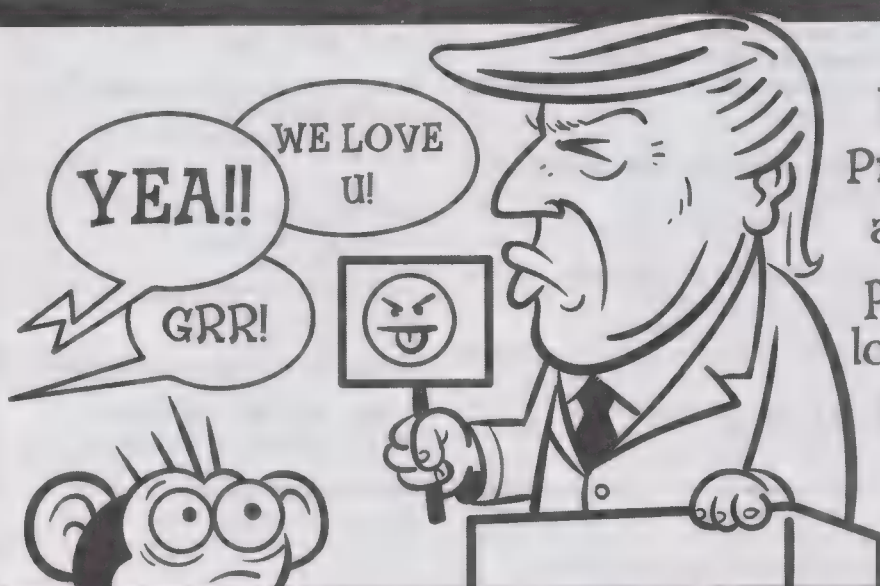
**'THE TIMES,
THEY ARE A
CHANGIN...'**

These are scary
times...and it
seems it'll get
worse...

before it
gets better...



**FEAR
HATE**



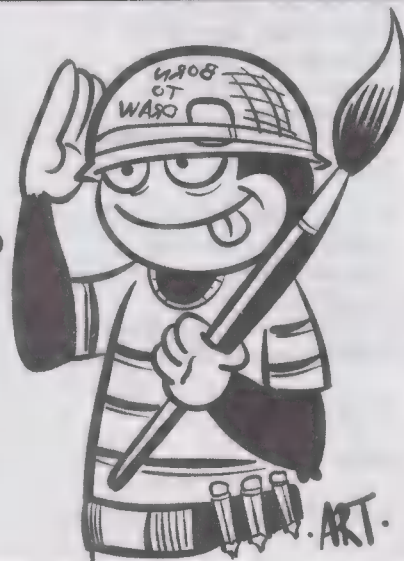
We elected a man for
President who is selfish
and hateful and who is
pledging to dismantle a
lot of the progress that
has been made in the
last 8 years...

What can I
do? how can
I help make a
difference?

By taking
care of the
ones I love!



And by
using my
talent to
bring joy to
anyone I
can!
We must
resist!!





PURO PINCHE POETRY GRITOS DEL BARRIO

EDITED BY EVER VELASQUEZ AND NICOLE MACIAS

**This one's for
the weird and
brown...**

Ska y Frijoles

I love the weird ones.
The brown ones.
Las Morenitas with mowhawks,
chealseas, and shaved heads.
With fishnets against their brownness
como una sirena caught in a net.

Those who eat mole
while putting up their quiffs.
Who get blessed before they leave for dark
nights of ska shows and 40 oz.

"Mija ten cuidado!"

"Okay mija bye!"

"Mas le vale que te portas bien!"

The ones who receive the silent goodbyes.

The ~~ones~~ who are called...

Feas.

Radas.

Sin Verguenza.

Putas.

Pendejas.

The ones who they call Callejeras,
you especially are my fucking people.

These are the Chicanas I love.

The Chicana Punx who decolonize.

Also the ones with no labels.

The rude and ska girls.

The rockabilly, psychobilly,
and metal head chicas.

The modern day Pachucas,

The goth Mexicanas.

The Skin byrds with the prickly hair
like the nopal.

I see you in the pit.

I see you on the sidewalk.

I see you on the mic screaming
because you are hurting.

Skanking because life is funner when you do.
Wrecking because the pain feels good.

Weird and brown.

Brown and wreckless.

Being weird and brown is essential.

People will tell you that you are less
because of it
and at times you will abandon your culture
because they hold the door open
to push you out.

Don't let them.

Because this movement is for you and
no one can take away your culture
without your consent
and fuck those why try.

This one's for the weird and brown.
The ones who speak shitty Spanish
and get told they are less Mexican
even though it's our colonizers' language
and not ours.

For the ones with suppressed sexuality in
Catholic homes
and heterosexual relationships.

For those who are sexually abused.

For those who are bullied.

For those who ~~are~~ undocumented,
do not feel ashamed to reclaim our stolen land.

For la Chicana who struggles
and hustles everyday

For la Chicana who is well off because of
your parents sacrifice when they left the
motherland, respect their journey.

For the ones who live in small towns
and dream of the big city and being
someone
You will.

For the women who have no one...
the most important person is yourself.

For the ones with nothing.

I give you this poem.

For the weird ones.

For the brown ones.

You will make it.

All you need is yourself.

-Alma Rosa

How Do I Bear Witness?

they say only Jesus
cried tears of blood
but i've seen a black man
held in a choke hold
long enough to be Jesus

you've seen this too
you've watched it over and over
viral videos
replay repeat
hands raised up to the sky
bodies collapsing onto ground
and lips frantically
mouthing don't shoot

so how can i ignore these murders
as i stroll through the park
enjoying how beautiful the sun is

this haunts me
and today blood is mine
as it pools in the streets
layering like scars
and I cry over how blackness
hasn't changed, a target
still laying claim to hearts
laying claim to stomachs overflowing

america, we're drowning in blood
and i've drowned a thousand times

in the blood of our dead
because black death is mine
just as much as it is yours

i am broken
my heart
another american casualty
but i'm not lonely here
because we are all in this together

baptized in their blood
no one is free
of guilt, not even me
i have a responsibility
to spread the word

they say only Jesus
cried tears of blood
but i've seen a black man
held in a choke hold
long enough to be Jesus

i'm watching black people die
i'm watching them disappear



KIMBERLY DILLARD

**...The ones who speak shitty Spanish
and get told they are less Mexican.**

and yet i go home at night
comfortable in my skin
cloaked in privilege
because blackness is crucifixion here

■ i ask myself
how comfortable do i sleep at night
when hate is real
when hate is hidden in plain sight
when hate is just outside your home
like the KKK at your neighbors door?
when they're rising
in Whittier and Fullerton
their flyers littering our steps
with messages of "trouble"
with messages of saving their race

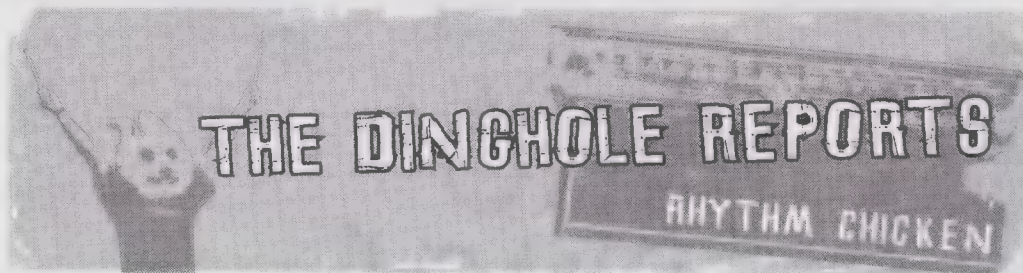
so don't tell me about progress
don't tell me you understand
or that you know what oppression is

they say only Jesus
cried tears of blood
but i've ■■■■ ■ black man
held in ■ choke hold
long enough to be Jesus

it is not enough to be witness

i must be Jesus too
i must preach in the square
about love and humanity
even if it ■■■■■■
i may be crucified
at my brother's side

—Cynthia Guarda



**We were
shaking the
dust from
the rafters!**

Teenage Punks Ready to Offend!

We were a few weeks into the summer after my sophomore year of high school. I had recently started working my first *real* job: entry level *pee-on* at McDonald's. I had also just started my driver's education classes. That and my minimum wage burger-flipping job were suddenly monopolizing my limited free time of summer. It was mid-June when my friends and I decided we would make the best use of our little shared free time together. We would make a band! Nothing felt more natural.

Terry and Aaron were already in a band called Muff Diver. Yes, fifteen-year-old boys in Green Bay made a band called Muff Diver. They had already played one show in town, opening for the False Prophets, but various members were already losing interest. Terry, the guitarist, started practicing with a new drummer Paul. Aaron the bassist wanted

cooked off a couple frozen pizzas. The most fun was always had after band practice. We inhaled the pizzas. Not many folks in Green Bay had an in-ground swimming pool, but Paul's parents were an exception. Twice a week we'd stomp out to the pool with bellies full of cheap pizza for the best part of band practice, *mock stage-dives into the pool!* Picture four fifteen-year-old boys trying to out-cool each other by acting out their favorite stage-dives into a swimming pool. Yeah, it was completely dorky. Yeah, we knew it. At least we grew out of that stage of punching each other in the balls... for the most part.

Thinking back to the summer of 1987, it was a real bummer in some ways. We had started working jobs and were skateboarding way less. We were all in driver's ed, which, in Green Bay, was a form of summer school.

embarrassment of Paul's family. Paul, however, always referred to that van as *the Shav* (the S.H.A.V., or Shit Hole Assault Vehicle). We really felt in-charge.

Our first show was a real doozy. For some reason, we were given the only local-band opening slot for D.I. and Doggy Style! At that time, I was used to seeing Green Bay shows with at least three or four local bands opening for the touring headline act. I remember showing up at Kutska's Hall to find out that D.I. and Doggy Style both had all their stuff on the tiny stage, leaving no room for ours. We set up on the floor as the room filled up with over two hundred punker types. Having never played bass in front of a crowd before, I was beyond nervous. I stood with my bass strapped on and my back to the crowd.

Picture four fifteen-year-old boys trying to out-cool each other by acting out their favorite stage-dives into a swimming pool. Yeah, it was completely dorky. Yeah, we knew it.

to become the singer. I was recruited to pick up Aaron's bass and learn the ropes, even though I was a drummer at the time. Pretending to play a new instrument lasted about thirty minutes until I was authentically playing this new instrument. Punk rock. Muff Diver was reborn with a new lineup and ready to offend!

We had a good four-hour window to practice every Tuesday and Thursday morning. I rode my little ten-speed bike over to Paul's house with the bass guitar just strapped over my shoulder, no guitar case. At times I would ride no-handed while playing the bass, practicing my parts and making rock faces to passing cars! We all piled into Paul's basement and practiced for a good couple hours, trying our hardest to sound like the Meatmen. Their album *Rock 'n Roll Juggernaut* had just come out and we listened to little else for months. Paul's mom was upstairs, quietly grumbling about the thundering punk rock erupting from her basement.

After about two hours of pounding band practice, we always stormed upstairs and

Nothing is less fun than school in summer. Our days of summer freedom were slipping away. We suddenly found ourselves in a new type of summer, a summer of limited free time. What I remember from my job that summer was just mindless drudgery. I was being pulled into young adulthood and not too happy about it.

The only truly fond memories I have from that summer were of band practice and going to punk rock shows, acting way too boisterously offensive for a bunch of fifteen-year-old suburban boys. Twice a week we got to live the life of punk rock teenage dorks who couldn't drive yet. That soon changed.

One by one, we all got our driver's licenses. Paul, our drummer, now had access to his family's crappy, beat-up van. This changed the band dynamic to a certain degree. No more parents driving us to shows and picking us up later. On the night of our first show, I wrote in the frost on the hood of the van "MUFF MOBILE." Somehow, those letters were still visible on the van's hood years later, much to the

Soon the room lights were dimmed and the few stage lights were turned down. I was about ready to jump out of my skin. Paul started the opening drum part to our first song and all eyes were on Muff Diver. Terry and I kicked in on guitar and bass for a few measures. Then the song really kicked into down and dirty Meatmen mode when Aaron started singing. Paul pounded harder than hard. Terry, Aaron, and I began jumping around and rocking out as hard as we could. We weren't gonna stand around and gather dust! We were shaking the dust from the rafters! We stomped around like the Sons of the Meatmen! We gave it our all and the crowd ate it up!

I remember trying not to notice the crowd and just trying to play as hard as I could. The few times I made eye contact with anyone other than my bandmates was when I saw a few older scenesters standing right in front of us, rockin' out in approval. Six or seven songs into our set, I noticed one other guy in front who was dancing in a weird way as if to mock the boisterously offensive teenagers on stage. Then it happened.



DANNY RUSTED

Timebomb Tom, with a magical and commanding wave of his hand, yelled out for us to STOP! Being the younger newcomers to the scene, we obeyed without question. Tom then proceeded to single out the weird mocking dancer guy and really gave him an earful. He, in no uncertain terms, let the mocking dancer guy know that we were indeed youngsters, but we were doing a pretty damn fine job at rockin' the hall down. The crowd backed up Tom and told the guy to lay off. Once confronted, he insisted that he was actually really enjoying us, and his weird mocking dance was done.

Tom gave us the nod to continue rocking the punk. We tore into our last song, and our only cover song, "Toolin' for Anus" by none other than the Meatmen! The crowd went ape! We rocked out harder than ever! We felt like kings, like true rock'n'roll juggernauts! As we finished, the crowd gave us a roar of approval and we proudly tore down our equipment feeling like new veterans of the rock stage, er, floor. Doggy Style were

getting ready up on the stage behind us and told us, "Nice job, guys." Tom glared at the mocking dancer guy the rest of the night.

Before leaving, the promoter handed us an envelope. There was a stamp logo on the front that read *Fresh Vomit Productions*. Below that, hand-written in pen, it said "Muff, \$35". WE GOT PAID. We got paid money. Cash. We got paid cash to have fun and feel awesome.

Now, almost thirty years later, I will have a very slow winter day at my soup shop where I make less than thirty-five dollars. While flipping the open sign over, I usually mumble to myself, "*Muff Diver did better than this.*"

**Pre-Rhythm Chicken
Dinghole Report #2: Bobby
Brady Drum Solo Ruckus!
(Pre-Rhythm Chicken
sighting #16)**

I had really only sat behind a drumkit once before my first session with the

Washington Junior High jazz band. I sat and watched Paul on drums for a few songs, the ~~same~~ Paul who later drummed for Muff Diver. Then Mr. Rossman motioned for me to man the kit. The song was "Neutron Dance" by the Pointer Sisters. The song started and I ~~was~~ drumming for about half the song before I remembered to add the bass drum. Then I got to a point in the sheet music where a whole ~~measure~~ were blank and simply labeled as "drum solo." I, being the snotty yet dorky punk rock geek, instantly broke into a wild and noisy rendition of what Bobby Brady sounded like on the Brady Bunch when he got his drum set. Mr. Rossman shook his head and covered his eyes. Paul ~~was~~ almost in tears laughing. The rest of the band had no idea where to go or when to join in. We had to start again from the top.

—Rhythm Chicken

A TRIBUTE TO MY
BEST FRIEND



PEEBER CAME INTO MY
LIFE ON DECEMBER 17,
2007.



HE WAS ABOUT FIVE
MONTHS OLD WHEN I
ADOPTED HIM FROM
THE ANIMAL SHELTER.



HE WAS A BOSTON TERRIER
BOXER MIX, MAYBE
WITH A LITTLE PIT BULL, TOO.

WHOEVER HAD HIM BEFORE
ME CROPPED HIS TAIL,
BUT THANKFULLY NOT HIS EARS.



HE WAS HOUSE-TRAINED
REALLY QUICKLY, WITH
ONLY A FEW ACCIDENTS
IN THE PROCESS.



PEEBER LOVED GOING
FOR WALKS MORE THAN
ANYTHING IN THE WORLD.



HE HATED PEOPLE THAT
WERE HOLDING BABIES,
AND KIDS ON SKATEBOARDS.



HE NEVER REALLY GOT
ALONG WITH OTHER
DOGS.



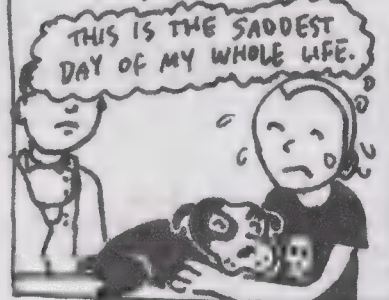
HE MOVED WITH US THREE
TIMES IN HIS LIFE, LIVING
IN FOUR DIFFERENT
HOUSES.



A FEW WEEKS AGO, PEEBER
CONTRACTED LEPTOSPIROSIS,
PROBABLY FROM CONTACT WITH
THE URINE OF A WILD ANIMAL.



WE HAD TO PUT HIM TO
SLEEP ON SEPTEMBER
28, 2016.



I HOPE HE HAD A GOOD
LIFE. HE NEVER HAD A
SINGLE FLEA, EVER.



BENSNAKEPIT@GMAIL.COM



Rachel Framingheddu's Photo Page

A view of the massive unfinished steel and concrete fence, standing over eighteen feet tall, that currently separates parts of the Texas and Mexico border. Partial erection began after the passing of the Secure Fence Act in 2006.



PUNK PARENTHOOD FOR THE SLEEP DEPRIVED

JENNIFER WHITEFORD

**Boys and girls
both have feet
and therefore
socks are for
everyone.**

Hey You, Are You Lookin' for a Fight?

I have no idea why Shawna started talking to me. We took the same bus to school, stuck with a handful of the other kids in our upper class suburb who weren't gifted cars when we turned sixteen. My parents were not car giving types. Shawna lived with her aunt and uncle who took her in after her mom passed away a few years earlier, and they weren't the car buying types, either.

The rating system of who is cooler than who in high school may be nebulous and unexplainable to adults, but no teenager involved is unaware. So I knew that Shawna was cooler than me. She was easily one of the prettiest girls in our grade and went out with one of the best looking guys. She wore stylish clothes and knew how to put on makeup. But still, for some reason, she liked to chat with me at the bus stop, and we slowly became actual friends.

Occasionally, I also caught the school bus home at the end of the day. Shawna went to her boyfriend's house after school, so I was on my own. That didn't matter much to me. I did not panic, even then, at the idea of being alone. One particular winter afternoon, a group of ninth grade boys at the bus stop decided to start noticing me. They were yelling something, but I had my headphones on and couldn't hear it. When I turned to see if they were talking to me, a snowball hit me full in the face.

The boys bent over laughing. When the leader caught his breath, he shrieked, "NICE CATCH, PSYCHO GIRL!"

Psycho Girl, it turned out, became my new nickname, but only as far as this group of eloquent youths were concerned. My high school was actually pretty decent at the time as far as bullying went. The aforementioned scale of coolness didn't result in much torment for those of us at the bottom of the scale. But these new dudes didn't get that memo. They saw a weirdo in a long black coat and messy ponytails with loud music seeping from her headphones and discovered a target.

After three or four days of the snowballs and the Psycho Girl shouts on the afternoon bus, these same kids arrived at our morning bus stop. Shawna noticed me scowl and asked what was up. I gave her a quick rundown and pointed the guys out. Without any hesitation at all, she stomped over to where they were conspiring in a tight circle.

"HEY!" She shouted at their backs. They turned to look at her. It was entertaining to see the instant terror on their faces. They may

not have gotten the memo about bullying, but they sure got the one about Shawna being higher on the social ladder than they were. And probably the one about her dating a guy who was friends with all the toughest dudes in the school. They seemed too stunned to verbally respond.

Shawna grabbed the leader of the group of dummies by the zipper of his jacket, close to his neck. She twisted her fist around once and pulled his face towards hers.

"Do you have a problem with my friend?"
"Wha-at?"

"Do. You. Have. A. Problem. With. My. Friend? Psycho Girl. Do you have a problem with Psycho Girl?" She gestured in my direction. He glanced at me, shocked and confused.

"N-n-no."

"Okay, then." Shawna released him with a shove. Those guys never spoke to me again. And the snowballs stopped.

*

About seventy-five percent of parenthood involves laundry in some capacity. And most of that seventy-five percent is focused on socks. Do these socks match? Where are the socks that are warm enough for winter? Why are you only wearing one sock? Is that a hole in the toe of your sock? Why do I have a giant bucket of mismatched socks in the laundry room? Are these your socks or your brother's?

In my endless quest to solve sock-related problems, I found myself in a department store kids section recently, looking at a wall of socks. For my younger son, Joey, I found a few pairs featuring characters from the *Paw Patrol* TV series. *Paw Patrol*, for the uninitiated, is an animated kids' show featuring a band of young dogs, who are regularly beckoned to a strange control tower by a human boy who leads them in solving various local problems. "It's like the *A-Team*, but with dogs," my husband explains to anyone who asks.

For my older son, Milo, I found socks with the characters from the Disney movie, *Frozen*, which he watches regularly at his grandparents' apartment. This movie, I gather, is about two royal sisters who have powers to make things cold. I don't know. I haven't seen it. There's also a snowman. The socks I found were purple and green with pictures of the movie's main female characters on them. They were in the "Girls"

section, but whatever. I knew Milo would like them. And he did. There was a bit of dancing and some running around in circles when he got home and saw them waiting for him on the kitchen table.

That night at bedtime, I asked if he was excited to wear his *Frozen* socks to kindergarten the next day. He confirmed that yes, he was really excited. Then waited a beat and informed me that "some kids might say they are girls' socks."

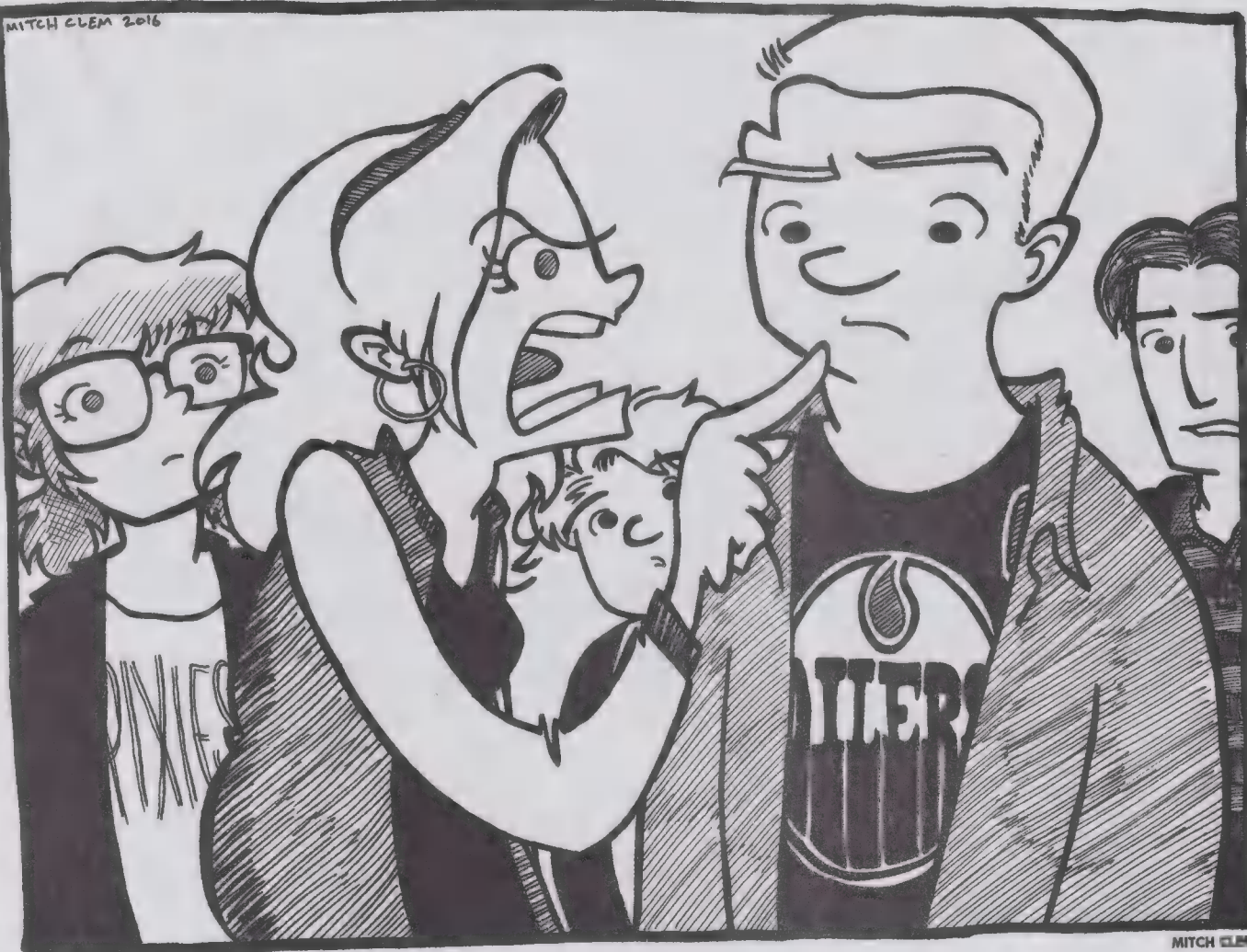
After assuring him that if someone said that they were clearly ridiculous, because boys and girls both have feet and therefore socks are for everyone, I said goodnight to him and he fell asleep quickly. I was proud of myself for not including a shrieking tirade about how since socks are not worn on our genitalia, they are OBVIOUSLY FOR EVERYONE and why is saying something is "for girls" an acceptable insult anyway when there is clearly NOTHING WRONG WITH GIRLS?

He wore the socks. And yes, two boys in his class gave him shit about wearing girls' socks.

I followed up with his teachers. They found the kids and asked them to apologize. They semi-scolded Milo for not bringing it to their attention when it first happened. They did not respond to my offer to provide some story books about gender diversity. I found myself seething slightly, wondering if it was too much to point out that this kind of teasing is not on par with the standard, "you're a smelly stupidhead" stuff. Making fun of a kid because he is a boy who is wearing purple socks with princesses on them showed the roots of misogyny and homophobia. This was bad. This was sort of terrifying.

Perhaps my heightened alarm had something to do with the fact that this all happened in the days following the election of Donald Trump.

It makes it so much worse when you can see the large-scale version of your child's small-scale bullying experience playing itself out on an international stage. How, I wondered, like many parents in the days following the election, do we tell our kids not to act like assholes when what they see is one giant asshole elected to the highest office in a country? The most important part of parenting, the part that is leftover after the socks have been sorted out, is teaching our kids that it's worthwhile to be a good person. I want my kids to learn that deciding



MITCH CLEM

Making fun of a kid because he is a boy who is wearing purple socks with princesses on them showed the roots of misogyny and homophobia.

not to be a bully is the right thing to do. Not because the teacher gets you in trouble when you make fun of someone's princess socks, but because it feels wrong to watch other people suffer. And I realized I should be teaching Milo what to do when he is a bystander to bullying, not just what to do when he is bullied. Because just raising a kid who is not a bully himself is not enough for me anymore.

I have always been emotionally susceptible to decent people standing up for other people when they have nothing obvious to gain personally. I cry every time I'm confronted with those kinds of stories. I teared up when I read an article about a moving company made up of high school athletes who move victims of domestic violence to new homes, free of charge. I was a total mess during the based-on-a-true-story movie *Pride*, where buses of straight, rural factory workers turn up to march in the pride parade after a

group of gay rights activists raised money for striking workers. And I used to weep when I saw the guys who stood on the sidewalk holding signs that said, "YOU CAN HAVE IT, LADIES!" and giving us sincere thumbs up during the women's Take Back the Night marches I attended in university. It's not just letting people march, not just refraining from violence, not just understanding that women are scared to walk alone at night and that sucks. Instead, it's actively doing something to nudge the boulder of progress so that it starts rolling down hill, picking up speed.

Shawna did that for me in a small way, twenty five years ago. When she used her own social standing and untouchable toughness to defend me and tell those jerks to back off, she showed them, and anyone else watching, that what they were doing wasn't okay. I don't live in the United States, but American culture touches a lot of what happens here, north of the border. We're already seeing

increases in bold, racist actions. People painted swastikas and "Go Trump" on a fucking playground in Brooklyn. High school students in Texas chanted "Build the Wall" at a visiting school team whose members were mostly Hispanic. Even here in my Canadian hometown, a local Rabbi's house was vandalized with anti-Semitic slurs the day after the election.

I used to feel like I lived in a bit of a bubble, where most people agreed on what was good and what was bad. But I was naïve when I thought there was significant distance between me and people who write racist garbage on other people's walls and on playgrounds. Shit's getting scarier. It's not enough to just *not* be a jackass anymore. That's my current parenting mantra. I hope it helps.

—Jennifer Whiteford





Chris Boarts Larson Photo Column - Neurosis
Chris Boarts Larson, www.slugandlettuce.net | fb.me/slugandlettuce



After twenty-five years, Neurosis continue to evolve and push at the boundaries of hardcore punk and metal, ever forging an original path. Their cult-like following runs deep and I am one of many who have remained dedicated through the entire journey. Neurosis connects my punk roots with a sense of something greater. Their sound speaks to me and has been part of the soundtrack of my life.

Everyone has their favorite album or time period; for me the transitional crossover era of *Souls at Zero* was deeply impactful. This album is perfection! Seeing bare-bones Neurosis at ABC NO RIO was golden. Seeing them two years later on Houston Street at The Bank with a larger stage, longer songs, keyboards, and backdrop for projection was the beginning of a whole new era. —Chris Harris Larson



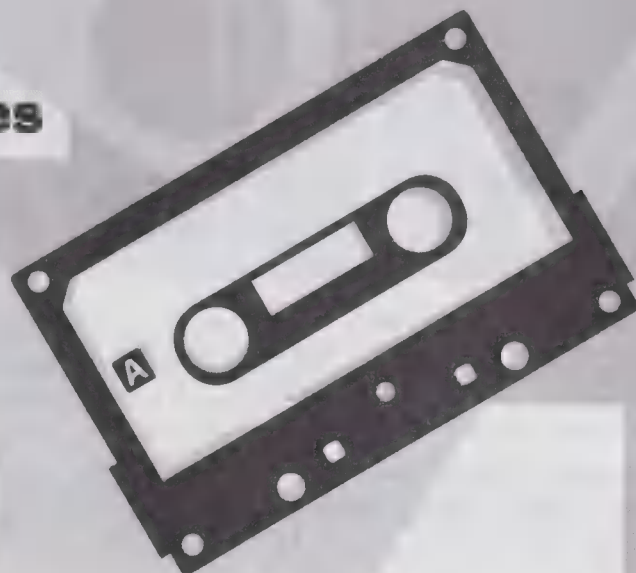
RUN-DMC

ONE PUNK'S GUIDE TO RAP MUSIC

By Chris L. Terry

Illustrations by Art Fuentes

Layout by Todd Taylor



The art of ~~man~~ pressure

October 2012. I woke up when it was still dark and biked through Chicago's Far North Side to catch a bus. I was teaching creative writing for a couple of nonprofits, and would sometimes spend half the day taking mass transit to different meetings, trainings, and classes. This morning, I was going to meet with a high school principal and sign paperwork that would allow two of my students to graduate. I was proud.

From my window seat, I sipped coffee and watched the sun rise over beige buildings, then get sliced by newly bare trees. The bus crawled down to the West Side, the black section of Chicago with less name-recognition than South Side.

I could have used more sleep, but I was excited to give Kendrick Lamar's new album, *good kid m.A.A.d city*, my undivided attention during the hour-long ride. I was sucked in immediately by the first song, a precise tale of meeting a girl at a party, sneaking off in his mom's minivan for a booty call, and getting cornered by gangbangers after parking on the girl's block.

good kid is about coming-of-age in Compton, California, where violence and vices can suck any young person in. Throughout the album,

between verses, one of the guys imitated the beat with his mouth. Out in my suburb, it was the coolest thing I'd ever seen.

At dinner, I tried to beatbox, too. Spaghetti flew. My dad told me to "stop spitting." I told him and my mom about what I'd seen—the group was called The Fat Boys. That weekend, Dad took me to a record store in Boston, and I picked out my first tape, *The Fat Boys Are Back*.

The Fat Boys were a New York rap trio originally known as The Disco Three. Their manager remade them as an approachable, humorous act, and this earned them success in an era when the mainstream still viewed rap as profane and far too black.

In the mid '80s, The Fat Boys were in a watch commercial, released the legendary "All You Can Eat" video (set at a Manhattan pizza buffet, of course), collaborated with The Beach Boys, and even starred as nurses in a movie called *Disorderlies*, which features a boob scene that my goon friends and I rewound a solid dozen times at my ninth birthday party.

The Fat Boys were essentially the prototype for the rapping cartoon animals you see in ads for macaroni and cheese, but I'd say that their music is more than just a novelty. Next time you've got a

Run-DMC's *Raising Hell* reminded me of rock bands like AC/DC and The Ramones, who used minimalism for maximum impact.



young Kendrick foams at the mouth after smoking laced weed, gets harassed by cops and gangsters who can't believe he isn't gang-affiliated, narrowly escapes arrest after breaking into a seemingly empty house with his friends, and sees one of those friends get shot by a rival.

Kendrick Lamar is an astoundingly insightful and technically gifted rapper. Throughout this album, his perspective is that of an innocent victim of circumstance. This isn't a deflection. Listening to *good kid* is an empathetic experience. It makes you feel like these extraordinary bits of bad luck can happen to anyone, and that fifteen minutes can determine the rest of your life.

I'd been thinking a lot about how circumstances can narrow options while teaching high school students and incarcerated kids, who often had a heartbreaking amount of things in common. I led writing exercises that helped my students pinpoint their own turning points. I'd been wondering about mine, too; about things I'm proud to have done, and questions I wish I'd asked.

I was born in March of 1979, two months after the first rap record was ever released. That would be *Rapper's Delight* by The Sugarhill Gang. It's the song that starts off with some funky gibberish: "Hip hop the hibbit the hibbit to the hip hip hop ya don't stop the rocking..."

You know it.

My parents didn't play it in the hospital when I was born, but I feel like I've been hearing that song for my whole life. In my geekier moments, I'm pleased to be the same age as rap music. We've grown up together.

Before I loved punk, I loved rap

It started like most hip hop stories: with educational television.

For those of you not born at the ass end of Generation X, *Square One* was a public television show that used funny sketches to teach math. I loved it, maybe because my hippyish parents didn't sanction much TV watching, and I had no real sense of my options.

One evening in 1987, eight-year-old me was watching *Square One* when this skit came on with funky music and three guys standing outside of a snack truck, shouting about eating lots of burgers. In

few minutes to kill, go online and pull up some of their videos and TV appearances. There are none more likeable.

Raising Hell

To paraphrase Notorious B.I.G., I let my Fat Boys tape rock until the tape popped, and was talking about it in my third grade class when one of my classmates said, "Oh, you like rap? Do you like DMC? My babysitter likes them."

This led to my first moment of geeky jealousy, where I suddenly had to know everything about this cool new bit of pop culture.

That night, I asked my dad about DMC.

"Never heard of them," he said, shaking his head.

My father is a big music fan. By then, he'd already exposed me to music that I still love—Prince, Jimi Hendrix, Muddy Waters—by pulling their LPs from one of his many particle board record crates and cranking them on the living room stereo. Realizing that there was interesting music that he didn't know about was a big moment. I'd just found out that there was a whole world out there beyond my house.

But Dad wasn't going to be outdone.

Later that week, I came home from school to find this purple and green record propped up on the hall table. On the cover was a photo of two black guys standing in front of a tall window in leather jackets and fedoras.

Dad swooped in from the kitchen, snapped up the record, and led me to the stereo by the piano.

"They're not just called DMC," he said. "They're called Run-DMC. I guess that's their names."

"Which one is DMC?" I asked.

Dad was already sliding the record out of the sleeve. "I don't know. The clerk at The Coop didn't tell me that."

He put the needle down and it was just two voices, louder than I was allowed to speak at home. The first guy shouted, "Now Peter Piper picked peppers," then the other guy chimed in, "But Run write rhymes."

They went back and forth a couple more times, then these big drums with bells kicked in. Dad moved to block the record player,

■ habit from years earlier when my sister and I would dance to Michael Jackson.

Run-DMC's *Raising Hell* was my first LP, and I've still got that copy, complete with abrasions at the beginning of "It's Tricky" from the time I almost lost my stereo privileges by trying to scratch it on the family record player.

Most thirty-year-old rap sounds quaint now, but *Raising Hell* is still ■ thrilling listen. Rick Rubin's production is super stripped down. The bulk of the music consists of nothing more than the two MCs' voices, trading shouted bars over swaggering, bare bones drum beats. Sounds as simple as record scratches, bursts of electric guitar, and extra percussion come in as hooks, but the songs never feel rudimentary or half-cooked. It set the quality bar high for rap records, and I can hear its influence to this day, from the way "My Adidas" inspired tons of rappers to give free product endorsements to giant corporations, to bare bones (and also Rubin-helmed) records like *Yeezus* by Kanye West.

I'm also reminded of rock bands like AC/DC and The Ramones,

then I = Rap

Cool!

If Rap = Black
and Rap = Not around here, buddy
then Black = Not around here, buddy

Uh-oh!

If I = Black
and Black = Not around here, buddy
then I was in a hostile environment.

Run!

It took white people two minutes and seventeen seconds to hijack rock'n'roll from Chuck Berry and Little Richard in the 1950s.



who used minimalism for maximum impact. And, speaking of rock'n'roll, the biggest song on *Raising Hell* is a remake of Aerosmith's boogie rock classic "Walk This Way," featuring two members of the band. This single was ■ smash hit, and is generally credited with (or blamed for) bringing rap music to ■ white, suburban audience.

The suburbs, and transitive theory

My family—my black father, Irish-American mother, and equally mixed little sister—lived in an upper middle class Boston suburb through the early 1990s. There were hardly any black people around, and I often joke that there were none of us left after two unrelated events: black boy-band New Edition's breakup and our family's move to Virginia.

In Massachusetts, most of my classmates were Jewish. Even though we celebrated different holidays, ■ lot of my friends and I had similar curly hair and full lips. I didn't feel like I stood out until adolescence set in, and I got old enough to understand that I had ■ different heritage. I wanted to know more about myself, and rap music was my way into a black identity.

I'll spare you the oft-told story of rap's genesis in the black communities of blighted, 1970s New York City, and just say that rap is ■ black art form. It didn't cross over to mainstream <ahem, white> audiences for ■ solid decade, and more than twenty years went by before Eminem showed up and destroyed the idea that white rappers lacked the skills to pay the bills. That cultural fortitude is incredible. It took white people two minutes and seventeen seconds to hijack rock'n'roll from Chuck Berry and Little Richard in the 1950s. And think about how quickly any idea can go global now.

This is all to say that, in suburban Boston, in the late '80s, there was still ■ sense that rap was a dangerous inner city movement. Even when I was only ten years old, classmates would crinkle their noses and ask why I liked it.

This created ■ conflict for me, a black fish out of water. While listening to controversial music appealed to my budding rebelliousness, I was drawing connections using the transitive theories I was learning in math:

If Rap = Black
and I = Black

Resident babysitter alive

Preteen-me fed his growing record jones by babysitting. One day, ■ mother asked me to come by to meet her kids. My mom drove ■ over. We both felt ■ little weird going in, because this woman was ■ stranger, and the first person to ever request ■ interview. Maybe that's why things got awkward, fast.

The prospective client wanted to talk to ■ more than she wanted ■ to hang out with her kids. I stood at the bottom of the stairs, in the house's foyer, while late afternoon sun streamed through the window between the tall plants in her front yard. My mom stood by the door. I was eleven, mainly concerned with hunting down R-rated movies, and completely unaware of the way a white adult might take my tall frame, scowl, and pubescent deep voice.

I told her I liked rap. She asked if I liked MC Hammer, who was all over the radio that year. I screwed my scowl tighter and said, "MC Hammer's a sellout."

My mom's palm slowly rose toward her forehead. The interview ended shortly after. In the car, my mom told me I'd blown it. I said I didn't care.

These days, rap is the dominant form of music in the United States, so it's hard to believe that, ■ quarter of a century ago, ■ debate was raging in the hip hop scene over whether rap music should cross over and go pop, or maintain its cultural and artistic integrity in the underground.

Keeping it real can mess up your business—be it music or babysitting—but ■ someone who linked his hip hop bonafides to his wobbly new black identity, I skewed toward the most hardcore gangsta and political rap I could find. This led to conversations like this with my father:

Me: "Who's Farrakhan?"

Dad: "Some clown who makes people who need help feel better about themselves."

And:

Me: "If 'Ho' is short for 'Whore,' is it spelled W-H-O, like 'who'?"

Dad: "I think it's just spelled H-O, but don't say that word. Your mother will be upset."

Me: "Okay. ... But, that messes up alphabetizing it."



N.W.A.

PUBLIC ENEMY



Dad: "I don't think 'ho' is in the dictionary, but really, it's best to just not say it."

I heard "ho" in gangsta rap. The most popular stuff was based in L.A., where NWA had helped to kick off the movement a few years before with their album *Straight Outta Compton*. *Compton* garnered a lot of controversy for luridly violent lyrics and a song called "Fuck Tha Police." NWA were nothing if not direct, and grade school me relished every cuss word.

I heard about Farrakhan, the black Muslim leader who claims to have been abducted by Jewish aliens, in political rap like Public Enemy, Ice Cube, and the X-Clan. In addition, they discussed black issues of the day, which are sadly identical to current concerns: state-sanctioned police violence, mass incarceration, and the cycle of disenfranchisement in poor neighborhoods.

The gangstas thought pop rappers like MC Hammer were wimps. The political guys thought they were sellouts. And they did sell. Think of songs like "U Can't Touch This" by MC Hammer, "Bust a Move" by Young MC, and "Ice Ice Baby" by Vanilla Ice. To this day, they fill dance floors at otherwise awkward social events like weddings and work parties, and for good reason: they're catchy, energetic, and patently inoffensive—designed to bring people together, for better or for worse.

listen to "Check the Rhime" by A Tribe Called Quest, the song it had taken me most of the drive to cue up on my new tape.

The Source and every other scrap of hip hop media that I could find said this album was a big deal, and I liked "Check the Rhime" when The Fly Girls danced to a snatch of it on *In Living Color*. It was cool without being "too cool for you," and struck a rare balance between sounding refined and lighthearted. The jazz samples gave the music a warmth that I will forever associate with car heaters, ski jackets, and other defenses against the winter cold up north.

I turned the music up a bit, looking through the windshield at the gray snowbanks and the bundled-up suburbanites picking their way across the icy lot and into the market. LL Cool J and Terminator X had songs about pumping hip hop in your car, and I felt like I was taking part in a rite of passage by doing the same. I nodded my head to the beat.

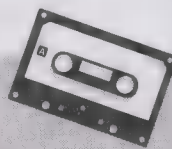
Then Dad—the only black man in sight—came out of the store and hurried toward the car. In the driver's seat, he frowned, turned the music way down, and said, "We can't play it this loud."

"Why?" I asked. "It's just the car. It won't bug Mom."

"But it can still disturb people," he said, pulling out into the light holiday traffic.

This was just a few months after Los Angeles cops were filmed beating Rodney King during a traffic stop, and the story had been in

Rap hit an even bigger audience, leading to all sorts of awkward shit, like white kids at my Boston school assuming black L.A.'s drawn-out, nasal cadences as they rapped Snoop Dogg songs.



■ vs. Hip hop

Generally, rap is the music while hip hop is the culture that surrounds it.

To call music hip hop is to tie it to certain aspects of the culture. For some, hip hop must include the original Four Elements of 1970s hip hop: MCing/rapping, graffiti, b-boying/breakdancing, and DJing. For others, hip hop's Golden Age (beginning with the release of Run DMC's *Raising Hell* in 1986 and ending in late 1992 with Dr. Dre's *The Chronic*) is the standard. This era's rap had sample-based music and vocals which emphasized lyrical intricacy over melody. Some of rap's most iconic music came out at this time.

Preserving either of these eras in amber goes against their innovative spirit. That's why I prefer to say "rap;" it leaves room for the new ideas that constantly spring up.

With that in mind, this narrative is moving into the 1990s, the most formative years of my life, and what many fans would say was the best decade for rap. Since one of my favorite current groups, Shabazz Palaces, says, "Every time we move, we do it straight up," I'll try my damndest not to come off as stuck in the past.

I mean, the '90s rocked

Minimum wage was \$4.25 and CDs cost seventeen dollars. You'd have to work half a day to gamble on an album that might have three good songs. Meanwhile, only a few people had the internet, and the ones I knew who did weren't into rap. I got music by dubbing tapes from my friends' cool older brothers, and spending my babysitting, birthday, and Christmas money on tapes and CDs. My dad, forever supportive of a fellow music fan, would always help me stretch my cash, and would usually let me play my new tapes in the car. I loved riding with him.

It was 1991, the day after Christmas, and I was sitting in the family car while my dad was in the grocery store. I'd stayed behind to

the news all year. Still, I failed to connect that nightmarish, grainy video to our lazy morning, even though both revolved around black people behind the wheel. Blasting rap in the car, even something as benign as A Tribe Called Quest, could draw the type of negative attention that throws you to the ground, with half a dozen cops going to town on your head, ribs, and crotch with nightsticks.

I couldn't verbalize it when I was twelve, but I remember finding A Tribe Called Quest accessible in a way that other rap groups weren't. Tribe had a middle class perspective, and seemed like guys I could be friends with. Seeing some of my own experience and potential in their music gave it more meaning, and began to add dimension to my idea of myself as a black person. It got me thinking that the experiences I was already having were black, because I was having them.

The album with "Check the Rhime" is called *The Low End Theory*. It's loaded with spacious, jazz-based music, and lyrics about dealing with the group's newfound success. "Fame is hard" albums can be a drag, so a lot of people ride for the follow-up, 1993's anthemic *Midnight Marauders*. I prefer *Low End Theory* because it was my first, but both albums are essential.

A Tribe Called Quest were part of a colorful, bohemian-leaning New York crew called the Native Tongues, that also included De La Soul, The Jungle Brothers, and actual women—Monie Love and Queen Latifah. They were among the first well-known alternative rap artists, and pioneered a jazz-rap sound that inspired some other crucial '90s albums like Gang Starr's deadpan *Hard to Earn* and *Daily Operation*, and Digable Planet's slept-on, Black Power-chic 1994 swan song, *Blowout Comb*.

I used to make myself mixtapes

There'd be rap on one side and alternative music on the flip—Nirvana, Fugazi, and the punk bands I'd found by working backwards from them. I couldn't figure out how to flow the two styles together, so they existed on opposite sides of the tape.

We had a boombox in my middle school homeroom, and I was quietly playing the rap side of my latest mix one day. The first song was “‘93 ‘til Infinity” by Souls Of Mischief, a crew of motormouth Bay Area teenagers who’d got their hands on the second most iconic horn blast in hip hop history (The first? “They Reminisce Over You” by Pete Rock & CL Smooth). This guy Dave who used to wear his older brother’s Doc Martens but then started hanging out with the preps screwed up his face and said, “You like rap? I thought all you skaters just liked classic rock.”

Dave may have been the last teenager on earth to learn that hip hop and skateboarding were cross-pollinating—maybe because hip hop had become a global force, maybe because the new popularity of street skating brought skateboarding to racially diverse urban areas. Regardless, I shrugged, pointed from the speaker to my griptape-shredded sneakers, and went back to bobbing my head and trying to flirt with the only girl at school who had Manic Panic’d hair.

Souls Of Mischief were part of Hieroglyphics, ■ young rap crew who went independent early on, and continue to collaborate. In addition to the first Souls album, give Del the Funky Homosapien’s first two albums (*I Wish My Brother George Was Here* and *No Need for Alarm*) a spin—he’s got a bottomless vault of P-Funk samples, and a great sense of everyman humor, like on the song “Sleepin’ On My Couch.” Want to get grittier? Casual’s *Fear Itself* will do you right, especially “Lose in the End” about the People’s Park riots. Maybe it was being from the skateboard-friendly Bay Area, but I think their popularity with skaters was indicative of a bigger cultural shift.

A lot of white ‘90s music mashed up different genres, created by different races of people. The Beastie Boys alternated between rapping about arcane ‘70s pop culture, playing instrumental soul, and ripping through hardcore songs. Beck rapped lackadaisical non sequiturs over a bluesy slide guitar. The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion played ■ dumpster-dived mashup of Elvis Presley, Isaac Hayes, and James Brown.

This global magpie ethos was liberating for me at the time. It made me feel like my blackness and my whiteness didn’t have to be oil and water, and that the right song off the Beasties’ *Ill Communication* could create a bridge between The Meat Puppets and Wu-Tang on one of my mixtapes.

It’s funny to feel nostalgic for that era now. At the time, white musicians’ clumsy appropriation seemed like an effort to prove that they weren’t closed-minded racists. But the movement that they set in motion has evolved. Now, the fake Jamaican accent in ■ third wave ska song, or the Beastie Boys’ take on meditative Buddhist chanting can sound more like colonization than liberation.

1, 2, ■ and to the 4

It was near the end of eighth grade and I was skateboarding in a train station parking lot with a few guys from school. It was one of four commuter rail stops in our town, and we loved grinding and sliding our boards on this one’s tall yellow curbs. This day, something I’d only read about in *Thrasher Magazine* had happened: girls came to hang out.

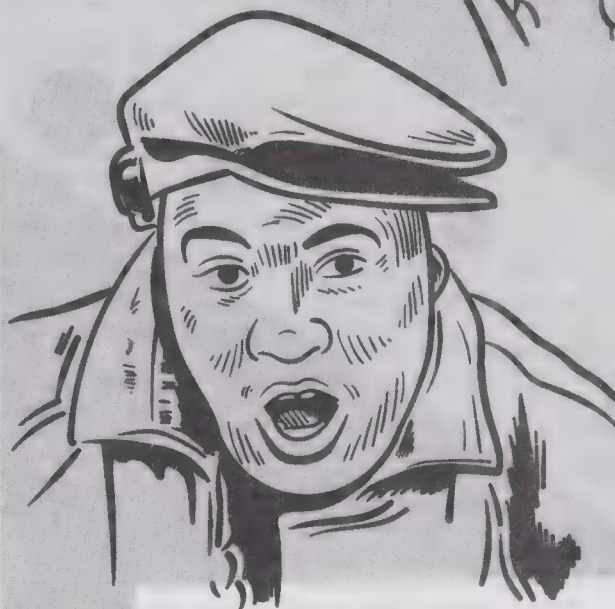
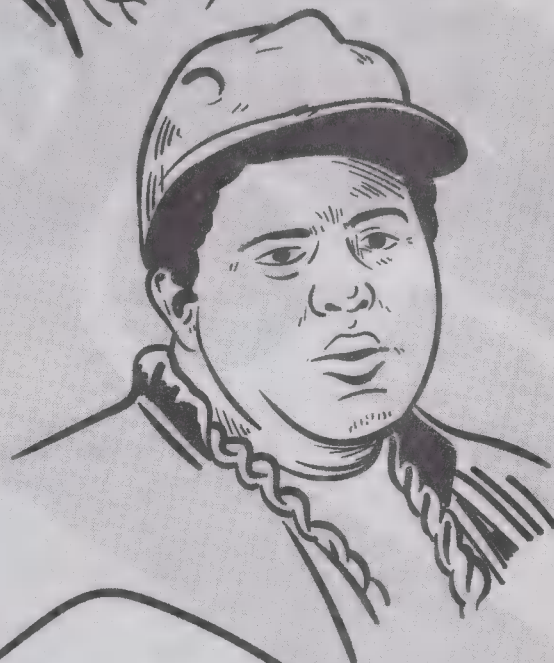
Melanie and Kate used to run with the preppy crowd but, they’d come into this school year wearing trendy alternative clothing, like black bellbottoms and super-long knit hats, and started hanging with the skaters. I wasn’t one of the cool skaters, so this didn’t do much but confuse me. I wanted a girlfriend, bad, but I thought being ■ skater was about being an outsider. Melanie and Kate weren’t outsiders.

They were sitting in the middle of a small traffic island, twisting ■ pair of headphones to play into both of their ears. I was gearing up to try and impress them by doing ■ nosedive on the curb at their feet.

Then I heard Melanie rap along with her music, “1, 2, 3 and to the 4.”

Kate smiled and added, “Snoop Doggy-Dogg and Dr. Dre is at the door.”

Later, I’d read that Dr. Dre’s 1992 album *The Chronic* changed everything for rap. It glossed up gangsta rap’s sound (but not lyrics) and got it on the radio. Commercial ambition and antisocial subject matter started to work hand in hand, and rap hit an even bigger



THE FAT BOYS

audience, leading to all sorts of awkward shit, like white kids at my Boston school assuming black L.A.'s drawn-out, nasal cadences as they rapped Snoop Dogg songs.

Dre's biggest albums—*The Chronic*, Snoop Dogg's *Doggystyle*, and NWA's *Efil4zaggin*—are still incredible feats of production, with deeply funky samples layered one on top of the other and blown-out to hi-def cinematic proportion, but the lyrics are hard to take if you've ever cared about someone who isn't a cis straight man. There are a lot of bitches and hoes in there, never mind the oddly homoerotic disses (they tell a lot of people to suck their dicks).

I wasn't thinking that big that afternoon at the train station. When I heard Melanie and Kate rapping, my board clattered into the street. I marveled at how I spent so much time trying to get my own thing going, away from the rich snobs who made me feel excluded at school, and now two of them were hijacking my favorite skate spot, singing along to a tape I'd owned for months. That same broadsided feeling would pop up later in life, too, when drunk randos tried to start trouble at punk shows, or competitive grad school classmates

I couldn't give myself over to the nihilism of the traveling gutter punks (or gangsters), and I didn't have the privileged comfort of the white punks who treated this bare-bones lifestyle as an ethical choice.



started asking too many questions about what I was writing, but this was the first time I'd ever felt like my sanctuary had been invaded, maybe because it was my first sanctuary.

From Where???

My dad had been out of work for a while, and my parents decided to move us to his inexpensive hometown: Richmond, Virginia. I'd lived in the same house for my whole life, and definitely did not want to leave. It took us over a year to actually go, and in that time, there was some discussion of staying. This uncertainty made that year feel like an eternity, and by the end, all I wanted was stability and close friends nearby, but did not have either.

The last couple rap tapes I got before finding out about the move were The Pharcyde's *Bizarre Ride II The Pharcyde* and *Kill My Landlord* by The Coup, and I played them for all of ninth grade, trying to recapture the innocence and excitement I felt when I plunked down my birthday money and bought them at the Tower Records on Newbury St. They were cool. They were things I'd sought out on my own, and I trusted myself.

The Coup are a Marxist hip hop collective from Oakland. Most of their cheeky protests and references to Maoism went over my head, but their music was organic-feeling funk, and MC Boots Riley's sarcastic tone matched my mood.

Almost twenty-five years later and I've yet to take The Pharcyde's first album out of rotation. If streaming counts, I've owned it on five formats. The Pharcyde were a quartet of cartoon-voiced young guys from Inglewood, California who traded fast rhymes about madcap everyday adventures—fucking each other's moms, crushing on teachers, waiting for the guy with weed to show up—over super upbeat music. Listening to the album is like watching Roadrunner and Tom and Jerry at the same time, plus it's loaded with funny quotables like, "I got more flavors than 7/11 Slurpees, and if Magic can admit he got AIDS, then fuck it, I got herpes."

Even moreso than A Tribe Called Quest, The Pharcyde sounded like a close-knit group of friends clowning each other on the bus, and I wanted that in my life so bad.

Do you wanna get it?

Things did not go well in Richmond. We lived with my grandparents, then got an apartment. My Ivy League-educated father still couldn't find work. I could read out loud without stopping, so I got put in Honors English where we memorized lists of verbs. I got a girlfriend and she cheated on me. I felt like a loser, and like there was no point in risking more humiliation by trying to win.

My favorite rap groups put out uninspired new albums. Puff Daddy and Mase ruled the airwaves with slick and flossy rap that celebrated overcoming adversity, however briefly. I felt like they were rubbing their success in my face. I hated it.

A skater friend took me to a five-dollar punk show at a club in our neighborhood. I loved seeing band members step from the crowd onto the stage to play weird and aggressive music that sounded like inside my head on the nights I couldn't sleep. It was inclusive. I felt like I could do it. I was hooked.

Blackout

I spent the next three years exclusively into punk and hardcore, peppered with record store guy rock like T. Rex and Big Star. My band drove up and down the coast playing skate parks and gutted tire shops for thirty people. I wrote zines and printed them for free in friends' parents' offices. By doing, I was succeeding, and that was something I didn't think I could achieve elsewhere.

I spent those three years denying myself as a black person. I surrounded myself with white people who didn't listen to black music. At home, I'd put on headphones and sneak Curtis Mayfield, or worn-out tapes of old rap favorites. I felt awkward around black people, like I was letting them and myself down, but didn't know how to stop.

I floated in a world that did not seem sustainable, and wanted to create a safety net. Reveling in not having a net requires a fearlessness that's contrary to my black middle class upbringing. We've just arrived and always feel ourselves teetering. So, I couldn't give myself over to the nihilism of the traveling gutter punks (or gangsters), and I didn't have the privileged comfort of the white punks who treated this bare-bones lifestyle as an ethical choice.

In my blackout, I missed the Wu-Tang Clan's murky, mystical, and unimpeachable run of mid '90s solo albums (*Liquid Swords*, *Only Built 4 Cuban Links*, *Ironman*). I missed the way the Notorious B.I.G. could say so much with the space between his perfectly chosen, simple words (*Ready to Die*). I missed the grand detail of Nas's street narratives (*Illmatic*). I missed social and cultural touchpoints that would have made it easier for me to relate to the black people I now saw everywhere in Richmond, where they'd never been in Boston.

White hip hop fans bum rushed my life

The harmonica-playing stoner at my bakery job stopped staring into the giant stainless steel bread mixer for long enough to say, "Man, Wyclef is like the next Bob Marley."

The music on the stereo was a mix of old soul and the boho rap I used to like, shared with an island accent, so I picked up his solo debut, *The Carnival*, and found a used copy of *The Score*, the blockbuster second album by him and Lauryn Hill's group The Fugees. I played

these albums before bed, thinking that the Native Tongues had passed Wyclef the torch, and feeling that particular punk rock guilt of loving something mainstream.

I went to visit Boston and my friend Mike had spent the last few years buying records. We sat in his bedroom, where he had set up DJ-grade turntables, and he spun *Mos Def and Talib Kweli are Blackstar*, a collab album by a couple of underground giants from Brooklyn. They were part of a scene that existed in opposition to what was on the radio, and I found myself agreeing with their scorn for commercial rap, but stopping short of wondering about the long-term possibilities of existing solely to resist. I chased the ripples of their work outward, and got the answers before I could raise the questions when I threw on Mos Def's *Black on Both Sides*, a classic album which explores black life, starting off by saying:

"We are hip hop

So hip hop is going where we going

So the next time you ask yourself where hip hop is going

Ask yourself, where am I going? How am I doing?

Til you get a clear idea."

A goth hockey jock I met in college (Yes, this was the late '90s) invited me to his dorm. His white, proto-Juggalo roommate put on *Aquemini*, the third album by Outkast, the Atlanta duo who put southern rap on the map.

I remember feeling right at home with Outkast's drawls and humid, soulful music, until the roommate started complaining about how loud "the niggers on (his) dorm floor are every weekend."

My goth friend and I showered him with, "What the fuck?"s and I left shortly after, borrowing the CD, torn between feeling like this racist didn't deserve great black music, and thinking I should return it, so he could work out the kinks in his worldview, one unrepentantly black and eccentric Outkast track at a time.

We could have fixed the van's tape deck, huh...

We were a bunch of broke twenty-two-year-olds and that money could go to the bean burritos and cheap beer that sustained our band on tour.

We figured that no tape deck meant no arguing over music, so we listened to the radio. The early 2000s were an innovative time for rap. Outkast was simultaneously getting quirkier and more popular with their Prince-obsessed album *Stankonia*. Virginia spawned two futuristic producers: the Neptunes, which featured a young Pharrell Williams and created pulsing, ticking minimalist beats for Jay-Z, Snoop Dogg, and The Clipse; and Timbaland, who composed gigantic, shuddering synth opuses for Bubba Sparxxx, Justin Timberlake, and Missy Elliott, a funny, body-positive, hard-partying woman rapper from Virginia Beach.

When Missy's "Get Ur Freak On" or "Grindin'" by The Clipse comes on, I'm transported back to the bench seat in that beat-up band van, where I'm glugging gas station coffee and staring out the window at the gray interstate, thinking there was fun in the world that I could finally have.

Do You Want More?!!!!?

My band broke up after a hundred-day tour and, at twenty-four, I was feeling like the old guy at the party in Richmond. I decided to join my sister and some of my friends in New York City, where they were either working for book publishers or just able to go to the store and not run into half a dozen people they could gossip about.

When I left, some of my Richmond friends said, "Whatever. See you in six months."

Being around people who couldn't imagine living elsewhere made me feel like a dick for thinking Richmond wasn't good enough. Who was I to want more?

I started to understand the aspirational rap that had turned me off in the mid-'90s—how it strived, and celebrated finally having nice shit. I didn't need to reach Mase's "On a yacht, nigga/fuck a boat that row" level of stunting, but I wanted more than just white people around me. More than getting trashed four nights a week. More than minimum wage, to use more than my hands and back.

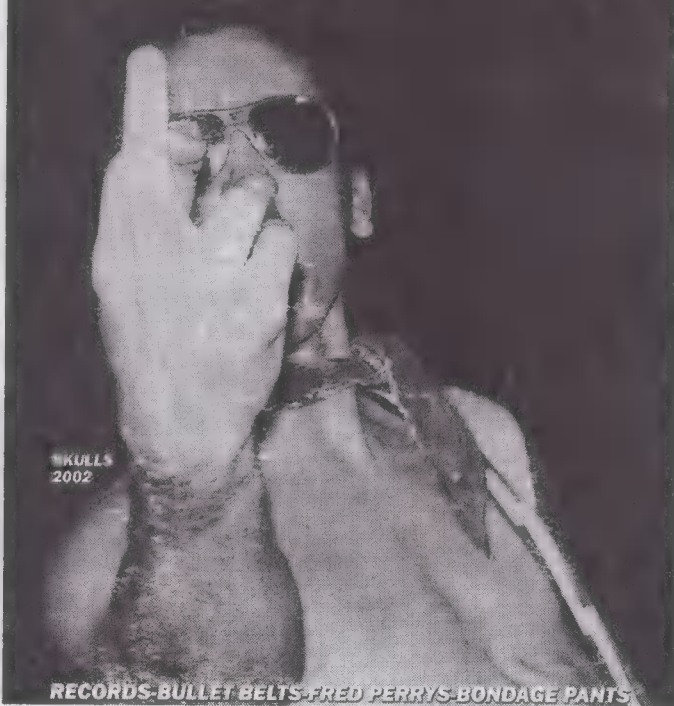


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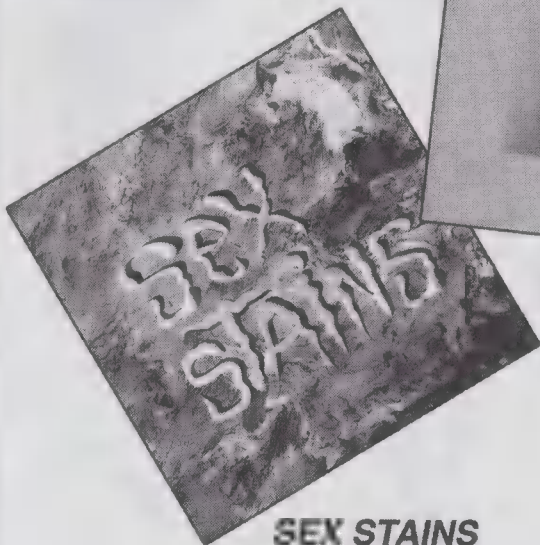
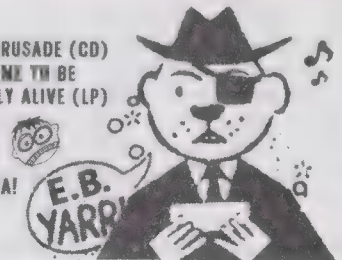
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Kanye West made me feel like that was okay.

His first album, *The College Dropout* had just come out. Gangsta rap was popular, and people didn't know what to make of this professor's son who rapped about self-consciousness, stupid retail jobs, and HBCUs. He was ■ spazzy preppy underdog who refused to choose sides and worked with conscious, underground rappers like Common and slick mainstreamers like Jay-Z.

It made perfect sense to me.

Kanye has always been ■ egotistical loudmouth, who interrupts awards shows to give his opinion on the nominees, and says the first thing on his mind during a TV interview. This arrogance is the main reason that his haters don't like him, but I see it as a form of self-love.

When Kanye says that his new record's, "not album of the year. It's album of a life," I hear another black hero like Muhammad Ali and Prince, who needs to emphasize his prowess to close the gap between his abilities and a world that expects and accepts so little from black people. We have to be twice as good to be recognized. We have to shout twice as loud to be heard. We have to believe in ourselves, because no one else does.

Ultimately, I hope to draw from Kanye and, say, Fugazi: working to achieve the best while trying to see all as equals.



MISSY ELLIOT

DANNY BROWN

I can't decide if this form of self-love is in line with punk's empowering Do It Yourself autonomy, or against its egalitarian humbleness, but it sums up my conflict as a black punk rocker. Ultimately, I hope to draw from Kanye and, say, Fugazi: working to achieve the best while trying to see all ■ equals.

I played *The College Dropout* in the moving van that I drove to Brooklyn. When I pulled the CD out of the stereo, Kanye's chipmunk soul beats were on half the songs on the radio—from Cam'ron's strange, funny, and vivid Harlem narratives on *Purple Haze*, to Common's golden, soulful tributes to black life on *Be*.

Kanye evolved as I grew up. I got chills when "Diamonds from Sierra Leone," ■ song about the cognitive dissonance needed to be ■ consumer and an oppressed person, debuted on the radio while I was in ■ Manhattan office building, realizing that I hated my first job that didn't involve ■ cash register. I listened to *Graduation* during my first vacation ■ an adult. I played *Yeezus* during an insomniac run along the Chicago lakeshore, trying to beat the anxiety out of my head as I anticipated the release of my first novel.

From forlorn autotune to gospel interpolations, Kanye always tries something risky, and always proves himself to be ahead of the game. While I don't love all of the trends that he has kicked off, I can't hate the innovator for his imitators—especially when his music has followed me, eliciting some of my most powerful emotional reactions to art. I'll cry when I hear ■ new Kanye song, just like I did the first time I saw Prince step on a stage in person, or like I do almost every time I hear President Obama speak. I feel overcome with emotion because they make things feel possible.

While his music and persona have grown increasingly erratic in the last few years, I could still make a strong case for any Kanye West album. His masterpiece is *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy*, ■ proggy epic made in the emotionally drained years after his mother died. Every song's production is gigantic and unique, and his lyrics are the most extreme examples of the tension between his arrogance and self-awareness. On ■ song like "Power," he sounds triumphant and



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suicidal all at once, and listening is the audio equivalent of speeding off a cliff.

One time for me, one time for the DJ

Some of my strongest memories are brief snatches of running—a view that I passed, and the song that was on my earphones at the time. I see the sun through the trees near the soccer fields at the bottom of Prospect Park whenever I hear the part of Lil Wayne's "We Takin' Over" freestyle where he careens off the rails, ditching the song's stunning, complicated phrasing, and spitting choppy words, "Beef. Yes. Chest. Feet. Tag. Bag. Blood. Sheets. Yikes. Yeeks. Great. Scott. Storch, can I borrow your yacht?"

I'd finish these runs relaxed, with my head full of ideas. I was in my late twenties and looking for the creative thing that would balance the responsible adult life that I'd been building, to give me a stronger sense of purpose, and bring me the fulfillment that I wasn't finding.

Lil Wayne is a New Orleans MC who got his start as a teenager in the delightfully sleazy Cash Money/Hot Boyz crew, the same party animals who brought us "Bling Bling" and "Back That Azz Up." Wayne had a bunch of hits, but no one had him marked as a craft-based contender for Best Rapper Alive. This changed in the mid '00s, when he released a nonstop stream of psychedelic, word-drunk mixtapes for free online. Releases like *Da Drought 3* and *Dedication 2* were loaded with tangled raps about addiction, depression... and blowjobs over the hottest beats of the day. Maybe Google's algorithms know my interests too well, but Wayne's name comes up first when I search the names of some of those original songs.

50 Cent may have been the first rapper to get a record deal by releasing mixtapes, but Wayne proved that releasing music for free online could be a smart artistic and business move, and it still has a strong hold on the ever-flailing record industry.

I wound up in Chicago, getting a Master's Degree in Creative Writing. During afternoons spent writing, I'd hope that my most imaginative pages would find their way out of my computer and flood the world like Wayne's music.

A word about mixtapes

At first, mixtapes were actual cassette tapes, made by taste-making hip hop DJs, and blending together the latest hits with rarities and tracks from up-and-comers. Over the decades, the format morphed. Now, a mixtape is a rap album that's available for free online. As record sales drop across the industry, a lot of recent artists have built careers around releasing album-quality mixtapes for free, and making money by touring and shilling for different companies.

Regardless of how you feel about seeing your favorite rapper in a soda commercial, mixtapes give the musicians greater artistic control. They've no longer got the label in their ear, telling them to hop on trends or collaborate with popular artists. Instead, you get the musician's complete vision, and for free.

Some great examples:

Run the Jewels, II. This is the safest bet for a punk rocker who wants to hear some current rap. Killer Mike is a community activist and former Outkast protégé. El-P used to run the label Def Jux, whose motto was "Independent as Fuck." El-P, known for a dystopian sci-fi style aesthetic, produces beats that make you feel like you can rip the roof off a Chevy. Listening, you get the sense that they're close friends. Both guys rap, trading rapid-fire bars while bringing out the best in each other—Killer Mike's southern bounce adding structure to El-P's clots of words while El-P's metaphors inspire Mike to dig a bit deeper personally. Their shit-talk is pro wrestling level ridiculous, and they rap about police violence, government surveillance, and wack rappers with a shockingly personal touch.

Chance The Rapper, *Acid Rap* and *Coloring Book*. Chance is an A-list rapper who is not signed to a label, and does not sell his music. He's a nimble MC with a voice like a jazz trumpet and a penchant for warm-hearted positivity that rarely cloy, because he knows how to balance it with insight and ambivalence. *Acid Rap* is him being like, "I'm twenty, some of my friends have died, my folks want me to go to college, but I need to drop acid and figure out what these dreams

that I'm chasing." *Coloring Book* came out three years later, and has a more nostalgic feel. The songs about god skew too far toward music theatre for my taste, but you can practically see the lightning bugs as Chance raps about summers past.

Danny Brown, *XXX*. Danny Brown's a Detroit rapper whose high-pitched yawn of a voice obscures that fact that he's a technically gifted rapper who draws super-personal connections between trauma and partying. Before he got on the festival circuit by rapping over bombastic EDM, he released *XXX*, a Wu-Tang raw collection of songs like "Scrap or Die," about scavenging for sellable scrap metal in abandoned houses.

Das Racist: *Shut Up, Dude* and *Sit Down, Man*. The New York duo of Heems and Kool AD made brainy and stoned rap satirizing to-the-minute hipster culture and people's reactions to their brownness—Heems is Indian-American, Kool is Latino. My favorite song is "You Can Sell Anything," where Heems raps, "What good is all your money if your style's still tasteless?/I celebrate the fact I moved into my momma's basement."

Shabazz Palaces: *Black Up*. Shabazz Palaces didn't release their stuff for free online, but should be mentioned here for their contrary nature. In an age where artists cultivate an air of accessibility through social media, Shabazz did the opposite. No one knew who they were for two EPs, and their Afrofuturistic music had to be taken at face value. Come to find out that they're a Seattle-based duo, featuring a former member of Digable Planets. They combine booming old school drums with space age synths and live African percussion, and *Black Up* is one of my favorite albums because it sounds like a cool breeze in the dead of a stifling hot night.

I was insecure because I realized/ ain't no room for the civilized

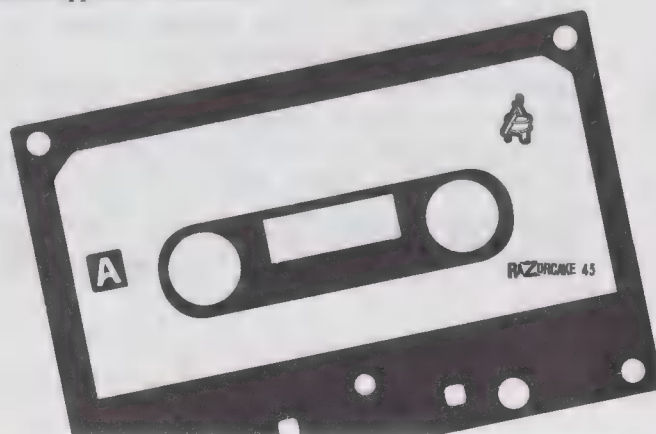
The world came at me hard in 2012. My parents' money troubles had them in their least stable position yet, and I wanted to help but hardly could. I'd just finished grad school and was juggling part-time teaching jobs while finishing my first book. I was seeking a stable life as a creative person—two things that can feel mutually exclusive. I felt greedy for following my heart.

Killer Mike's *RAP Music* spoke to this conflict. Mike was in his late thirties and contemplating retiring from rap when he first paired with producer El-P to make a classic album that shoveled personality and pathos into the hard-hitting political rap of Ice Cube and Public Enemy.

RAP Music (RAP being an acronym for Rebellious African People) spoke to my conflicts—the excitement of small victories, nostalgia for simpler times with your family, the ways that race-based trauma can ripple through generations, and the dissonance between loving where you're from and hating the way that it treats its citizens.

It felt like a perfect portrait of the conflicted black adulthood that I was seeing in myself, and I played it over and over—while cooking on my one day off from a sixty-hour workweek, while staring out over houses from the Red Line train, and while running along the Chicago lakeshore and staring at the distant downtown. The trunk-rattling beats dredged up history and pushed me forward, embedding Mike's nimble cascade of lyrics into my own consciousness.

I felt like I'd found the friend who'd tell me to do better, who I'd sometimes tell to shut up. I played it over and over. I did better. I shut up. This record was me, exaggerated, in the old-school Cadillac I'd never drive. Like Mike says in the title track, "This is what my people need and the opposite of bullshit."



SHARKPACT

INTERVIEW by CRAVEN ROCK // LAYOUT by LAUREN MEASURE

In the ~~was~~ hours after last call, I'm lucky if an overworked bartender, just off his or her late night shift, gets in my cab to go home. Though the world of cabdrivers is a weird, mid-world vacuum compared to a buzzing bar, we've both been dealing with the same drunken, wealthy, entitled dirtbags all night. There's an understanding between cabbies and bartenders. They're the first human that's really seen you all night. The first person that's really talked with you. You share stories, bitch a little, and have a few laughs. And without fail, they tip well, (better than any rich suit) letting you know you're

appreciated. This bartender-cabbie connection means everything on a shitty night or after a series of them. I feel a similar sensation when I listen to Sharkpact.

Sharkpact, a duo from Olympia, is unafraid to express feelings of hopelessness, profound sadness, and despair of both the state of the world and their inability to change it. I don't need a self-proclaimed "activist" band to tell me I'm a "sheeple." I don't need sloganeering or rhetoric. I need an aware band. Not sugarcoating the truth, but not stooping to an oversimplified, fuck-

it-all nihilism. Rugged and spare, Jefferson's spastic drumming meets the crashing avalanche of Camille's huge distorted synth riffing over both their warm and expressive vocals. They deal with heavy shit, but listening to their songs doesn't bring you down. Sharkpact offers solace and rest for their listeners and themselves. Talking to Camille and Jefferson (and their partner in crime/producer, Joe), I found that just about every part of the band's lives seems dedicated to resistance. This dedication takes immense courage and, perhaps, is what gives Sharkpact their musical power.



Camille: Synthesizer and vocals
Jefferson: Drums and vocals

Photos by Daniel Torres, Eric Brika, and Mike Wilson

Craven: I've always thought of "rock," the genre of music, as separate from the act of "rocking." Like "rock music," as a genre, is pretty clearly defined, yet "rocking out" in performance, in music, is almost a state of being. I'd say Sharkpact is definitely a punk band that rocks, but are you a "rock band" considering you don't have any guitars?

Camille: Hmm, that's a really good question.

Jefferson: That would mean that The Screamers weren't a rock band.

Camille: Exactly.

Craven: Not to say that The Screamers didn't rock.

Camille: So, what's up with that?

Craven: Hey, I'm the one asking the questions.

Jefferson: Dude, I don't know if I care if we're a rock band or not.

Camille: I think we're not a rock band. In

my mind, initially, I'm like, no. But, yeah, we do rock!

Craven: You have a really unique sound with rather spare instrumentation.

Camille: I play a Casio CZ5000 which is a cool keyboard synthesizer from the '80s and I don't use it to its full capacity at all. It was under a pile of garbage at the Red House (a long-standing punk house in Olympia) when we were cleaning it out. I was like, "Oh, this is awesome" and set it aside. We were in the Hail Seizures and were going on tour. We had to drop off two members in New Orleans and had to get back somehow. The only way we could actually think of doing that was to form a band with the two of us. So Jeff played drums and I played that keyboard.

Craven: So...necessity being the mother of invention...

Jefferson: Yeah, it was a truly utilitarian band to start out with. It served a purpose, which was gas money.

Camille: Which we didn't do that well.

Craven: But you made it back?

Camille: We made it back. [laughter]

Craven: Without having to call mom.

Jefferson: Even if we could call mom, it wouldn't have helped.

Craven: There's something very earthy about your sound. It's certainly in your drumming. Synthesizers are instruments that have a reputation for being kind of cold, but your sound is the opposite. How did that come about?

Camille: It took a lot of time and figuring out what the hell we were doing. As far as sound wise, it took us years to be like, "Oh, that sounds like garbage. Wouldn't it be cool if it were better than that?" and using different pedals. Always having a problem where the lows and the highs were canceling each other out, so it was never quite full enough.

Jefferson: When we first started, there was only one amp. It was always behind me. So I would turn everything up as loud as it could go, without Camille having much to say about it. I'd say, "Our band isn't loud enough..." And I'd just turn everything up. It sounded like a total piece of shit for our first bunch of shows.

Jefferson: We were friends before bandmates.

Jefferson: From Olympia.

Camille: Being weirdos.

Jefferson: I met a lot of people at that time because of Food Not Bombs in Olympia.

Craven: Neither of you are from Olympia?

Camille: Yakima, Washington.

Jefferson: Livingston, Montana. Livingston was like eight thousand people. I came from a very small town.

Craven: In Montana did you feel you had a punk scene? Was it more like a county punk scene?

Jefferson: No, it was just Livingston proper.

Craven: Wow! You're lucky.

Jefferson: Yeah. We had shows where thirty, forty people would show up.

Craven: That's crazy to me. I didn't meet a punk until I moved completely away. When I moved to Louisville from Southern Indiana, I made a friend who had come from the same county as me and we were like, "Why didn't we know each other back then, man?!"...

Jefferson: We kind of didn't really know we were punks. We were just listening to punk music. And after the fact we were like, "Oh, we're punks." We were all just hanging out listening to music that's characterized as punk music and we were like, "We're punks... too." A lot of folks who I met at punk shows when I was thirteen and fourteen years old were poor kids as well. That was a really cool thing to come across—where all the poor kids come out and get wild and get freaky and it doesn't have to matter what we look like. We all finally felt like, "This is a place for me."

Craven: One thing that you cover a lot is classism—struggling to get by, struggling to set up sandbags against rising waters—while at the same time the rent always being a month away.

Jefferson: We write songs about being poor currently and about being poor growing up because that was both of our experiences. I struggle with being bitter towards people who come from economically privileged backgrounds and that may never change. And in a lot of ways, being in the world—and even within a subculture—it can feel like a lonely place, in respect to finding people who've had that shared experience and finding how they relate to you.

It helps to write songs about that. I may always be bitter, but one of the ways that I can let all of that bitterness out and work through my feelings around that shit is through writing songs. "New Narrative" is a direct rip from my favorite movie *Cool Hand Luke*, when he talks about how, "sometimes nothing is a pretty cool hand." That's one of the reasons I like making music and hanging out with Camille. We both have a common understanding that life is more exciting when you try to make something interesting out of what is there, even when sometimes it doesn't feel like there is a lot to work with.

Craven: Like a keyboard under a pile of trash?

Both: Yeah.

Camille: You have to be creative and adaptable, which sometimes isn't a common thing. Recently, my mind has been boggled by the lack of creativity in pop culture and I think, "What the fuck! Why would you buy this thing when you could just make it out of nothing? Why spend money doing that?" It seems ridiculous when people, who have the means, buy things that already look kind of punk, like clothes. Forever 21 studded jackets and stuff like that. The fashion punk world is something that I will never relate to because I would rather just make a cool thing out of trash because that's something I've been doing for so long and it is always way cooler when

you can be creative and know that you can do that. You can reach your goals. Like making that Halloween costume, I had a vision in my head, "I'm going to look just like Beast from X-Men and got this blue robe. It was way off, but I made it! And it was a cool costume. And it was really funny. If I had enough money to just buy a Beast, costume it would have been cool but it wouldn't be as fun and I probably wouldn't even remember it.

Craven: It's rewarding?

Camille: Yeah, and sometimes with the younger punks, I'm just like, "Why would you just buy that like that?" Or, "That's cool that you can, but it takes the fun out of it."



I struggle with being bitter towards people who come from economically privileged backgrounds and that may never change.

Craven: So our friend Chaske wanted me to ask you a question: "As we all know modern rock's landscape has been heavily shaped by pacts with the devil or Satan. How is ■ pact with a shark different or the same?"

Everyone: [laughter]

Jefferson: I think the stakes are lower with ■ pact with a shark.

Joe: Because you're below sea level, underwater.

Jefferson: There are fewer movies made about pacts with sharks than pacts with devils.

Craven: The first time I saw you, you challenged the use of cocaine by punks in the Olympia scene. I do drugs myself but, to me, coke is like buying a blood diamond. But I don't know what your reasons were.

Jefferson: This is ■ confusing thing. To be clear, I think all drugs should be legalized, no exceptions. The reason people die from overdose—and struggle so much with addiction—is precisely because of the cultural stigma around drug use. That being said, I think cocaine culture is super annoying. I think it promotes this exclusivity or a "VIP" attitude. It's expensive. It's done in private. It's not shared. All these are non-communal things. It has kind of always been a drug for rich people, and rich people are destroying the world. So my associations with coke are pretty negative. In general, I associate cocaine culture with gentrification. That may be an over-exaggeration, but I think that it's worth bringing up, like how does an influx of coke affect a community? What does it represent? Ya know?

Craven: That's a good point. I definitely associate it with wealth and that's why it's gross to me.

Camille: The political background and the road on which it comes to this country is fucked up and to ignore that is just gross. I've never done cocaine and that's my own choice. But my mom had a cocaine habit when I was a kid. She got clean when I was really young, so I'm against it for that stuff, too. So it's kind of like, completely fucked.

Craven: When I go into a party and there's coke there, generally the people there are going to be the more fucked up, hipster crossover end of punk rock. That tends to be my experience. I don't want to sound like fucking Nancy Reagan, but...

Jefferson: The thing is, a lot of our friends up in Canada do coke and it doesn't bother me at all because I love them as people. They are bad ass punks who spend their time fighting gentrification, and they just like to party. Yeah—whatever—I'm a hypocrite. Maybe it's just that I hate when this hipster shit overruns the town every so often—with their phony art and entitled attitudes—and my hating on cocaine is really just a cheap jab; where actually the important conversation isn't about cocaine exactly, but about what kind of resistance communities we're trying to create and what our shared values are.

Craven: Eventually people stop thinking about what's important.

Camille: It's a mess. It's a fucking mess.

Jefferson: There's no articulate response to that question. Because also it's not actually hard drugs that harm communities, it's the mainstream culture's attitude toward people who are traumatized. It's okay and—in a lot of ways—totally awesome that we all use drugs to ease our pain or just to deal with this shitty life. Maybe what it boils down to is that we are hypocrites, and some people who are on a bunch of coke are annoying because they talk a lot. [laughter]

Craven: So you're on ■ farm now?

Camille: We're on two and a half acres of land that is kind of like a forest.

Jefferson: There's no farm yet. There are some grapes. It's the beginning of our dream. Recording studio, art, land, sculptures, growing food, building weird shit. Camille's gonna have her tattoo studio. We'll have a zine-making studio. Joey's building a house out of a school bus. Hopefully, we can convince some friends to build shacks in the back to live with us. I've always been inspired by Crass and Dial House, so I see it as an extension of that idea, and that kind of vision. Full communism, you know.

Craven: And you live on it with how many people?

Camille: Five. It's a two-bedroom double wide. Joey's building the two-car garage into ■ studio and control room, which is pretty awesome.

Craven: The Olympia scene seems awesome and thriving. Can you tell me about your place in it and what it means to you?

Camille: Well, I think Olympia is an amazing place. I just feel really lucky that I

moved there, spent ■ lot of money on college that I don't do anything with, and met all the people that I know. And I made this life for myself there that is really awesome. I feel like I've done ■ lot of really cool things in Olympia. I think it's ■ really cool place for people to find themselves and to have the time to do creative things. It's a special little bubble. It's a bubble of good and bad together in Olympia.

Jefferson: I've lived in Olympia for about ten years. Whatever the current moment's hype, is there has always been a consistent awesome DIY scene. That's what I care about most; that if you move to Olympia, you can form ■ band in two weeks, play your first show in three weeks, and people will come or they won't come. So many people for so many years did so much work that it's generally pretty easy to be ■ artist in Olympia. And that's really unique.

Craven: It does take ■ certain personality to live there, though, right? It's ■ small community where you see the same people all the time.

Camille: Small town vibes. Because of things like shows, everything is a really social experience. It's the same people, so there's gossipy shit. If something happens to me, within an hour, sixty percent of all the people I know will know exactly what happened to me. Everybody knows each other's business—which is fine—but also weird sometimes.

Jefferson: Yeah. Sometimes I feel like people in Olympia spend a lot of time hashing out minute arguments with one another, but within the broader scope of global capitalism, this shit is really fucking meaningless. The things people bicker over in Olympia—or the way different scenes don't play shows with each other—there are all kinds of assumptions about other people and just all sorts of shit that festers because that's what happens with small communities. People are really intertwined.

Craven: Have you ever had any desire to live in ■ big city?

Camille: Yeah, I was really wanting to move to New York for a while and I was going to move. And then something happened and it didn't work out. But now I don't want to anymore. Obviously, I live on ■ fucking dirt road in Shelton.

it's not actually hard drugs that harm communities, it's the mainstream culture's attitude toward people who are traumatized.

Jefferson: A lot of our friends live in cities...

Camille: It's cool to visit. I love visiting the city.

Craven: Olympia made news recently when a cop shot Andre Thompson, twenty-four, and Bryson Chaplin, twenty-one—two unarmed black men and stepbrothers—and critically injured them. The city's outcry and protest over this was really a big deal.

Camille: It was May 21, 2015.

Jefferson: That event really brought everybody who is radically-minded together in a positive way. While saying that—within the radical to liberal to leftist spectrum—there are all kinds of arguments and discussions about how people should respond. There were people who were doing direct actions. There were people who were like, "No. We shouldn't do direct actions." There were people who were protesting and there were people who were like, "We shouldn't be protesting in that way." So it brought everybody together, but it also illuminated the ways in which the Olympia left is composed of many different thoughts as far as resistance to police brutality.

Camille: It also brought out a lot of strange things that we don't deal with in a very blatant way, like a lot of intense racism from neo-Nazi groups that were coming to support the police. They had their own demonstration against the radical Olympia demos. It was so strange to have all this white power shit going down in Olympia and things getting violent. That, for me, was getting a little scary; dealing with people and buddies being like, "Get your baseball bats out and torches with fire." The whole thing is very complex.

Jefferson: There was one night where a few hundred of us went downtown because it was rumored there were going to be some neo-Nazis. It was a really cool march that happened on the west side to downtown that culminated in a few carloads of skinheads—and their cars—getting beat up and getting run out of town. It felt like that night really brought everybody together, but, in the long term, did that do anything to foster an anti-racist Olympia? Those small victories, even though they're flashy, are only flashes in the pan. Whereas trying to create an actual anti-racist sense of being in Olympia—which is

predominately white—takes a lot of constant work rather than just a night of running Nazis out of town.

Craven: Has it inspired anything like that?

Jefferson: It inspired different groups of people of color organizing and meeting each other in ways that maybe hadn't happened before. It definitely made a lot of us white folks talk more about our own internalized racism.

Craven: So the neo-Nazis came out in support of the police?

Camille: Oh, yeah.

Jefferson: They had specifically anti-anarchy stuff up, too.

Craven: And the police were there?

Joe: The police were right there when it all happened. After the car windows got broken and people got beat up, the police didn't do anything. It just kind of dissipated, which is weird, because I think that was a political move on the police's part to try and appease everyone. Maybe they hoped that the radicals would fuck up, turning the whole town against radicals or vice versa. It seemed very calculated by the police.

Craven: So is an anti-anarchy symbol a circle within a circle with a line through it, or is it just one circle?

Camille: Or did they just draw a line through it because that's all you would need to do. One line. [laughs]

Craven: Well, there's already a circle, you know, around the A..., so if you're going to X it out—put a "no" sign around it—you got to put another circle around it. I don't know... it's just how I'd make mine.

Everybody: [laughter]

Craven: I like your songs because they don't offer a false transcendence but more of a determined acceptance. They deal with coping but not in a way that's condescending or guilt-tripping.

Jefferson: I don't know if anyone would mistake us for overly optimistic people.

Camille: [laughs]

Jefferson: I'm a depressed fucking person. Being a depressed person, that's what comes out in every song. Accepting the fact that you're depressed. Accepting the fact that this world as it stands is a really difficult place to live in. And it's like, "Dude, this

is life as we know it and life is shit." And maybe with the songs in *Sharkpact* there are little glimmers of positivity running through it, but I don't know.

Camille: It's like that mug that our friend Claire gave us. She said, "I think this is a really appropriate *Sharkpact* mug." It has a cloud and a little rainbow behind it and it says, "The sun will come out tomorrow." It's mixed feelings.

Craven: I feel like songs that are super positive can be very alienating. That's where your music hits me in a way that I can understand. There is a bit of light in there but it's not someone always telling you to...

Camille: [in mocking voice] Chin up and be yourself! Get out there!

Craven: Exactly.

Camille: And you're like, "shut the fuck up."

Craven: But it's not some sludge metal...

Camille: [laughs]

Jefferson: Yeah. Newsflash: The world as we know it is collapsing around us, but we can still sit around and laugh and make jokes or do an interview or be in bands. It's a complicated time to be alive.

Camille: It really is.

Craven: I just remember a time people thinking, "We can still turn it around." Then I remember the next wave of radical people getting really back-to-the-land and not really having the same hopes of saving things. And now everybody is walking around with no idea what to do. It's not apathy but more like hopelessness.

Camille: It is kind of hard to judge anybody for not doing anything radical at all. Even back ten years ago I'd think, "*What the hell are they doing? Nothing!*" Things are definitely different. It's a different world and it's really hard to know what to do when the world is so fucked up... hard to know where to start.

Jefferson: I think that's an overall sense of why we're trying to do this thing where we're living on this land, building little shacks and trying to create a space where we can foster some environment that's creative space in a time of utter hopelessness. It's more putting all your energy into the place where you're directly living so that regardless of what happens over the next twenty years, we'll have a spot to get weird with all of our friends. Because, honestly, very often I don't



know what to do with my time. The beast that we're fighting is so gigantic.

Craven: You've written songs about suicide and certainly addressed it at some of your shows. At Razorcake, a lot of people have had to deal with it recently. Is it something you wrote about because of personal experience?

Camille: This last year in Olympia has been pretty intense ■ far as friends dying and because of suicide. It's been ■ heavy year for people in our community. It really levels you when your friend commits suicide because there's nothing you can do. It is so confusing. Your brain tries to make sense of things it's not necessary to make sense of.

And also for the community it can be very leveling. It brings people together in this way where all the little drama and the stupid bullshit that you thought you cared about does not matter anymore. It's like a reset in this weird way. I feel like I'm constantly being reminded that that thing I'm being mad about isn't important because there are so many people who I care about that I need to pay attention to—and how I'm treating people and being a friend to people. It's just been ■ really hard year.

Craven: Yeah, it seems like it's getting really prevalent...

Camille: It's also really weird to talk about, just in general. It's confusing because in

your mind you think, "It's selfish." All the taboo of it. And just, generally, it's ■ really hard thing to talk about—very confusing and very sensitive but very common, which is really sad. Maybe people need to try more to actually talk about it. It is ■ confusing thing to be like, "It's so sad" and it makes you think, "I wish I would have done something." It's just fucking tricky shit to talk about and it sucks.

Jefferson: The part of ■ that doesn't want my friends to die is like, "Yeah, if we had environments where people constantly felt like they were of value then they wouldn't kill themselves...." But the truth is, I don't know if that's necessarily true either, because our friend who killed himself recently—up until the day he died he presented and acted as though he felt seen and valued by his friends. So that was just his choice. So, how do we feel about that? Sad? Or indifferent? I don't know. He's just gone.

For the past bunch of years, I've worked with homeless folks and ■ lot of them deal with addiction challenges, self-esteem, depression, and anxiety. Mental health challenges. Through that work, you begin to realize that the more you can create an environment where people feel safe in talking about drug use, the more healthy choices can be made around that. Where

at the same time, if we, as friends, create spaces where we all feel comfortable talking about killing ourselves—because it seems like a lot of my friends think about this or, if not, have attempted suicide or completed suicide—that if we spent more time actually saying, "It's cool to talk about this shit," maybe we could make more informed choices around suicide.

Craven: Well, it seems like there might be people who somebody can talk to if they're desperate, but how many times? Is there ■ time when they feel like they can no longer come to that person?

Camille: You'll never know what someone else's experience is like. No matter how similar your life has been to someone, it's just impossible to know what is happening in someone's mind.

Craven: In your songs you talk about towns and then you talk about nature. You have many songs about the environment and relationships between people.

Jefferson: There was this cool book called *The Triggering Town* by Richard Hugo and that was the most inspirational book about writing fucking poetry—or songs, or whatever—because a triggering town to Richard Hugo meant just go to any random town and you will ■ things that will illustrate bigger concepts better than feelings can. For me, writing songs

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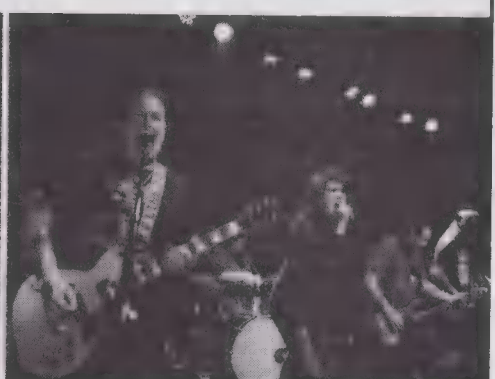
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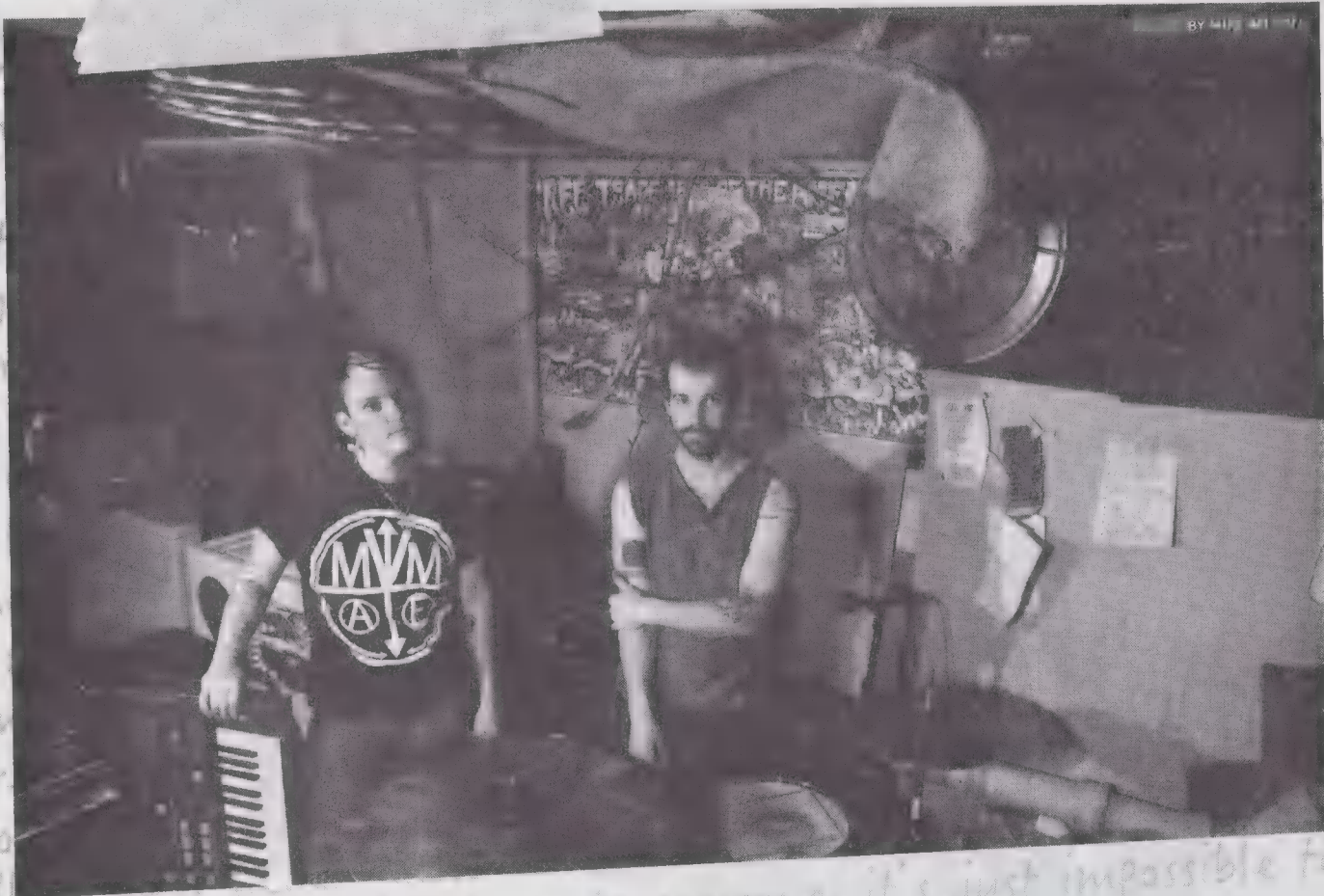
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And I don't think it's as simple as saying punks or DIY punk music is the cause of gentrification, but I think it's important to be thinking... "What role do I play?"

with words relating directly to your feelings... I don't like listening to songs like that. I like listening to songs or reading poems or that just add some layers to that shit.

Camille: Well, you get the experience of feeling that feeling, not someone telling you what they're feeling. You know what I mean? You allow the other person to feel that thing. You're just painting the picture.

Craven: It's how a place feels and when you put that into a song. It can be a lot easier to connect to it.

Camille: Jeff is really good at writing lyrics that perfectly summarize into one sentence an entire emotional experience. I feel like he's really, really good at that. You've taught me well.

Jefferson: I had this professor one time who said songs are really just bad poetry, and it's true.

Craven: It's funny that you would mention poetry because everybody makes fun of it, but the less relevant it becomes to popular culture, the more it shows how fucked up our culture is. Poetry might be an easy joke, but the fact that there's little room for poetry in social media culture except as a joke definitely shows us that there's something wrong.

Jefferson: As a band, it does take us a while to think about lyrics. We put a lot of intention in them. We do a lot of it for ourselves, because songs are like fun puzzles and creating meaningful metaphors makes me feel alive. I love taking time to read people's lyrics. I love a lyric sheet.

Craven: That's how I connect to a band; even if I don't know all the lyrics—if I can pick up some of them. In your song "Bullshit

Frame," you reference an "Art Murmur," what is that?

Camille: Oh, that's the thing in downtown Oakland every month or something.

Jefferson: A monthly art event.

Camille: It's an arts walk. We are talking about the gentrification of places and that being a very specific example of it happening.

Craven: I was living in Oakland when it started. A black woman and Oakland native had referred to the Art Murmur as the Mason-Dixon Line.

Camille: Oh, yeah! That works!

Jefferson: "Bullshit Fame" is also about us being like, "Where do we fit into that punk bands? How are we contributing to this thing?" After we wrote that song and went on tour and played it, that's something we would always talk about because every fucking town

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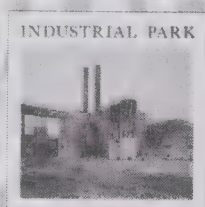
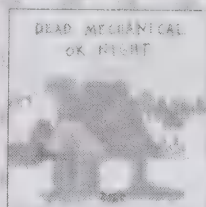
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Olympia because they can't afford to live anywhere. That's definitely ■ hard thing to deal with—the need to resist to things changing in a negative way—but then also there's a balance to things changing where it's just different. You have to accept it with a more open mind. There are more people and it kind of sucks—especially when you know they have more money than you—but what are you even going to do? Shut the gates and don't let the people in? I can't do anything about it, so I just try to think about taking their money at my job.

Jefferson: The punk thing to say is, "You destroy capitalism and that's what solves gentrification."

Camille: Psh! Yeah!

Jefferson: And that's true, but, whatever...

Craven: Yeah, that would be nice.

Jefferson: But in a practical sense, it is really difficult to understand what to do because capitalism isn't going to collapse in some quick and manageable way. And to become nihilistic or basic in our ideologies, to just simplify everything into catchphrases does jack shit except make us feel good. Our actions do matter, though. How we treat one another matters. It's dangerous not to confront our internalized capitalist and racist attitudes, and how that informs our ideologies, especially our radical ideologies. It's pretty fucked up. So how we choose to engage or not engage with our direct neighborhoods means a lot.

Craven: Your words "focus your eyes / reclaim your time" always stood out to me.

Joe: That's some old school shit.

Camille: Whoa! What song was that?

Jefferson: I think that's the first song we ever wrote.

Camille: That was the first song we ever wrote.

Camille and Jefferson: That's on "City"?!

Jefferson: That song's about Fourth Avenue Bridge in Olympia. We used to play punk shows under that bridge. The days of punk shows under the bridge have long gone.

Camille: Yeah! God, it's like... "When the hell? How long ago was that?"

Jefferson: 2010. During that time, we both were working jobs that we hated and were thinking about the fact that your life is just composed of only so much time. It's nobody's responsibility but your own to make your life what you want it to be. And it's possible to have a life that's full of time, that's meaningful, and not just spent working for some asshole or some worthless cause or whatever.

Craven: Or on the internet.

Jefferson: Or on the fucking internet.

Craven: Any last words?

Jefferson: All punks move to Shelton, Wash. 2017!

Camille: Don't.

or city we play in, we are almost certainly playing in the neighborhood that's being newly gentrified or, in the next five years, will start to see gentrification. And I don't think it's as simple as saying punks or DIY punk music is the cause of gentrification, but I think it's important to be thinking...

Camille: ... "What role do I play?"

Jefferson: ... Yeah, and aware of what the fuck you're doing and the intentions behind why you're doing something.

Craven: Right now, everywhere in the Northwest has dealt with it to a huge degree. The rent in Seattle went up fifty percent last year. That's an actual fact.

Camille: It's like, *fuck!* You know?

Jefferson: Capitol Hill's like this crazy hellhole that I don't even recognize.

Craven: It's pretty crazy. It's one thing that makes me feel really helpless.

Camille: [laughs] Yeah, it seems pretty intense here in Seattle—also, feeling the effect of it in Olympia and just the sheer amount of people who are moving to Olympia as ■ cause and effect. Olympia's current population is 48,000 people. What's the projection of the population growth in the next five years?

Jefferson: In the next fifteen years the projected influx is going to be thirty-three thousand more people.

Camille: I thought that in five years it was going to be ten thousand more people.

Jefferson: Probably.

Camille: There are like ten thousand new people coming from Seattle and Portland to

Pedal Strike

Gnarly Charly: Vocal chords
Dirty: Bass
Ivan: Drums
OT: Guitar

Interview by Rene Navarro
and Daryl Gussin
Photos by Gabie Gonzalez
and Robert OldHCDude
Illustrations by Charly
Layout by Daryl

OLDHCDUDE



This is L.A., not "L.A."
Does that make sense?

This isn't television. This isn't Hollywood. This isn't even the L.A. punk that has received attention from scholars and shoe companies. Pedal Strike is self-propelled L.A. punk. This band is one of those rare examples of how good it can be when it all comes together to shirk cliches and genre pigeonholes. Community over competition. Fuck your condos; this is development of the mind and body. These guys live up their own shows, release their own album, and have helped

jumpstart their scene. It's a manifestation of how engaging and fun a band can be while still standing for something. Pedal Strike represents what's happening on the streets of this city, in between the lanes. The work you have to put in just to create some space for yourself, with detractors and cops on every corner. Defeat isn't an option.

And then there's the sound: ripping, garagey, surf-punk guitar, tailed by a rhythm section that predates high school, with The Beat From The Northeast leading the charge. This is Los Angeles. Pedal Strike! Ride your bike! -Daryl

It seeps into your bones. That's why I haven't tried to be anything but myself. And I just figured out that it's punk that's for me.

Rene: Where did your nicknames come from and are there others?

Charly: OT is also Turbo and Ivan is Peanut.

Rene: Turbo? What does that mean?

OT: That would be one that Charly gave me when we used to ride bikes a lot.

Charly: Turbo was good in the sprints. And his name is OT, so we also called him Overtime from his OG punk days.

Ivan: I don't know how Peanut came about. I think it was just a reaction to calling OT another nickname that he didn't like.

Daryl: What was the name he didn't like?

Ivan: It was Otter. [laughs] Yeah, he just picked something random to call me.

OT: I always thought it was because he would draw a peanut guy.

Ivan: I would draw him after that. I just took the name and went with it.

OT: High school days.

Dirty: Yeah, high school days. That's where "Dirty" came from, too. Mr. Zackarian, he would teach computers. This is when I first started practicing parkour with Charly. I came into class all dirty and he called me Dirty Dan and everyone laughed, and it just stuck. And now I just tell everyone it's for something else. [laughs]

Rene: And Gnarly Charly?

Charly: I think it was in '06. I was climbing a building at a Lower Class Brats show in Long Beach [laughs] and when I came down I was all adrenalized out, and the punk rock homegirl Jasmin Sosa said, "You're Gnarly Charly." And I was just like, "Yesss." And I've just been going with it since '06.

Daryl: Is it true that in high school some of you didn't like each other because some of you were punk and some were metal heads?

Dirty: Damn, which one of you assholes said that?

Charly: It's not true. If anything, we were just too punk and too hard to acknowledge each other.

OT: I would say some friends might have been like that, but for the most part, we were friends.

Dirty: I was all into metal.

Daryl: Dirty, are you a thrash metal guitar shredder?

Dirty: Yeah, I used to play a lot of metal. I still do. But I play the bass for these guys and it's fun because I'm able to take it a lot of places. I've known Ivan since middle school, but these other guys I didn't talk to them until after high school.

Rene: The name Pedal Strike invokes cycling, activism—both things I've heard you advocate—what did you personally want this band name to say about you as a group?

Charly: Pedal Strike! Ride your bike! It should make you want to move in both ways—in a revolutionary way, and also in a physical way.

Dirty: Yeah, exactly. Pedal Strike, ride your bike. Think about bikes.

Charly: The revolution is going to show up on a bike. It's a conduit for a more powerful message. It doesn't matter what the message is, but it's going to show up riding a bike.

Daryl: What do you think is so powerful about the bicycle?

Charly: I can go forever on this one. Freedom, pedal-power, you're a self-propelled person. You're free. Rules become more of a suggestion and you learn to bend them. And you begin to see a line of sight in the traffic and you think, "I can make my

way through here." And it's good for Mother Nature. Grandmother Earth is on our side, because we exhale what she breathes in, and vice versa.

Daryl: How did you come to feel this?

Charly: I got my license suspended a long time ago for running a red light, which I didn't pay. By the time I could possibly get my license back I was already two years into riding my bike non-stop, and I never looked back. And I don't need to drive. I get around everywhere, and see these guys all the time. And if I can hitch a ride or skitch, I'll do that.

Daryl: What does skitch mean?

Charly: Skitch is when you hold onto a whip while you're riding. [laughs]

Daryl: You hold onto a car while you're riding your bike?

Charly: Yeah, you hold onto your handlebar with one hand, and you hold onto whatever you can grab onto with the other. Just freestyle, on the go. See a car going the same speed and see if you can get it. And maybe they don't even figure it out 'til later. But it's not a technique I would recommend unless you've been riding for over ten years.

Daryl: That's impressive.

Rene: Have you ever had someone get upset?

Charly: Yeah, sometimes they tell me to get off. Once I opened a door to a van on the way to Culver City. I grabbed the handle and the whole door swung open. And I saw the whole family and I just remember a little kid screaming. [laughs] I just yelled "Sorry!" and slammed it shut. There was so much traffic I was able to just keep going.

Daryl: If you're reading, Los Angeles: Lock your doors.



Charly: Yeah, people don't lock their doors. I've opened more than five doors before.

Rene: Oh geez.

Daryl: What was Iron Horse?

Dirty: Iron Horse was fun.

Charly: Iron Horse is the name of our next album in honor of the bike gang that all of us and some other homies, who are also in the music scene, started. Our goal was to not have an internet presence. We never wanted to post about our rides anywhere. Though we did post about one ride and a lot of people actually showed up.

But I had a homie who always rode a road bike, but on that ride his derailleur malfunctioned. We did some quick roadside service and turned his bike into a single speed. He rides fixed gear today. Iron Horse. We're like urban, galactic banditos galloping down the boulevard. You just hear a sonic boom, and just smell kush, and you're like, "Oh fuck, what was that?" That was Iron Horse.

Dirty: Yeah, that was the legend.

Charly: We got up to sixty-eight rides.

OT: Yeah, we'd meet up every Tuesday around nine. And we'd go out for a ride. For

over a year. And then we just kinda stopped cause of jobs and whatnot.

Charly: Everyone stopped and I just kept going.

OT: Yeah, Dirty still rides.

Dirty: Yeah, still skitching out there.

[laughs]

OT: Before we even started Pedal Strike, we were all riding bikes as our main source of transportation. It was a way of life for a lot of us.

Ivan: I think without that, we might not have all been together.

Charly: It re-energized us because we kinda stopped all hanging out. Then bikes brought us back together and then we started the band.

Dirty: And the first Pedal Strike show was at the Bike Oven (a local bike co-op).

Daryl: How important has the Bike Oven been to Pedal Strike?

Charly: Shout out to Chicken Leather at the Bike Oven! That's where we got our chops.

OT: That's where we built our core fan base. They have always opened their doors to the community. Offering their services and showing us how to work on bikes. Helping

us fix bikes. And you can bring that back to punk rock. That's why we all got into punk rock. That DIY mentality.

Daryl: And they're just so resourceful. Constantly making stuff out of what other people are throwing away.

OT: Exactly. And they're just real people who like to party, too. They host rides. Along with the Flying Pigeon (local bike store), they were once neighbors with the Bike Oven.

Charly: Shout out to Josef Bray-Ali, who's actually running for city council. He started the Bike Oven out of his garage, and when he got the space for the Flying Pigeon, he got the space next door to start the collective. And he would throw the NELA Spoke(n) Art ride. They go to all the galleries and check out the art, and there would always be a reception at the end at the Bike Oven. That's when we got our opportunity to become the house band.

OT: Our first shows there were crazy shows.

Charly: All the lyrics are about bikes, you're doing it in a bike co-op, everyone there rides bikes, and they couldn't believe that we were playing something for them.

OT: And people were also just really fucked up too.



Daryl: It's ■ Saturday night, BYOB.

Ivan: Yeah, and it's ■ small room. It gets packed and cozy.

OT: They broke Ivan's cymbals.

Ivan: Yeah! Two days after I bought them.

Charly: Playing at the Oven is just preaching to the choir.

OT: The first show we only played four songs, but we played them all twice. [laughs]

Charly: 'Cause we were done, but everyone was yelling to keep playing.

OT: We were like, "All right, one more time." And we were drunk. And I guess we tend to do that when we get too drunk. And we accidentally play the same song twice. [laughs]

Daryl: This is something that has happened multiple times?

OT: A few times.

Rene: One thing I've noticed about you guys is that you've made a local fan base, but with gentrification hitting so hard around here that it's literally made national news, how do you think you, or your scene, have been affected by that?

Charly: That's ■ good one. We recently played at the Hi-Hat (a new local venue),

and I went in there, just remembering when it used to be the pool hall where we used to drink in the alley and then go in and play pool. And now the whole street is gentrified. And we're playing there, but they're paying us. And there are more venues that are popping up, but what's happening to the culture that was there before? That we're a part of. There's a balance that we're walking, or riding, should I say.

OT: Definitely. northeast L.A. didn't have many venues in the past ten or fifteen years. Mr. T's was there, maybe. The Airliner.

Charly: There was still ■ scene, though. And it was forced to be a backyard scene.

OT: Yeah, there was ■ backyards scene, which isn't as strong in Highland Park ■ it once was. Definitely not now compared to East L.A. or South Central where it seems like the backyard scene is thriving. But yeah, more venues are opening. Like Charly said, the Hi-Hat is one of the nicer venues Highland Park has had.

Ivan: Offbeat.

OT: Right, there's The Offbeat.

Charly: Which used to be Dusty's.

OT: Which was ■ super sketchy bar.

Charly: Café NELA. That used to another sketchy bar that you could get stabbed out in front of.

OT: Yeah, and now Café NELA is our favorite venue to play.

Charly: So there is a positive to it all, but we have to look at both angles.

OT: I feel bad for the people who are getting kicked out by the investors. There are positives and negatives.

Rene: Speaking of Café NELA, I know you've done multiple residencies, which is four nights...

OT: Well, the first one was five nights 'cause he gave us Thursdays and there was five Thursdays in that month. [laughs]

Rene: How would you describe these events, not only from the standpoint of an opportunity to be playing weekly, but the inclusion of different scenes, like metal, rock. There was ■ hardcore night.

OT: Yeah, a lot of people have given us good feedback about how we did that. And—like we were talking about earlier, about punks and metalheads fighting in high school—but at the same time, ■ lot of those friends, besides being into different genres, they're



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GABIE GONZALEZ



all musicians and they all love music. And we still connect to these people because they're playing music. So we saw these people we remembered playing shows with in high school, or saw playing in high school, and they still love music 'cause they're making it. And we wanted to give them a shot. There are a lot of great metal bands here in northeast L.A. and there always have been. Punk rock too, indie, alternative, whatever you want to call it. Psychobilly, we have a little bit of everything. We're trying to get the best of all worlds, and I think that's the Pedal

you gotta step on some toes to be where you wanna be.

OT: But yeah, shout out to Café NELA.

Charly: The venue alone is cool, the space.

Dirty: The energy in there.

Ivan: And there is a backyard.

Charly: Actually Dave Travis (owner of Café NELA) was on the Cypress Park Neighborhood Council and me and him did a term together. That's how I met him, and I was like, "Let me play a show at your spot." And he asked for a CD. But we didn't have anything like that. And all our homies' bands

lot of hours getting good. It's an individual's sport, for sure.

Rene: What if you're playing doubles? [laughs]

OT: Doubles, that's a whole different story. Doubles is cool. Tennis is one of those sports, you could be eighty years old and you can play doubles. You don't have to move around too much, you have your homeboy covering for you. I'm at the net, I'm gonna smack this. Hit a winner. It's fun.

Rene: Okay, anyone can take a shot at this one. Would you describe punk as a sound,

I think I can be a stunt man, jumping through glass, out of a burning building, into some water. I feel like I can jump from one moving car to another one.

Strike sound, too.

Charly: Just break the monotony.

Daryl: And bring everyone together.

Ivan: We got bands that we actually liked, which we personally enjoy and want to see ourselves.

Charly: We curated it so we would have fun.

Daryl: What is the biggest difference going from playing the backyards to playing the bars?

Charly: It doesn't get raided.

Dirty: Rules. [laughs]

OT: With Pedal Strike, we've played a few backyard shows that have been great.

Charly: But we've all been in bands that have played in backyards.

OT: Yeah, in high school we were playing in backyards constantly.

Dirty: Load-in times, and check-ins, sound checks. Drink tickets.

OT: We're just older. It feels weird to be playing in a backyard with a bunch of kids. And I think the people we hang out with are more likely to go out to a bar or somewhere like that. Somewhere that won't get raided.

Charly: You put all this time and energy into it and then the cops show up after the first band. Which can be a positive. [laughs]

Daryl: You get to go home.

OT: Cool places—that are hosting you and letting you have a free show, or are charging but are giving you some sort of payment. But there are also places that wanna fuck you over, that are not so cool, so you gotta be careful. We're kinda banned from the Airliner. [laughs]

Charly: It's all part of the show. Sometimes

were playing there. We finally got some recordings and I shot it to him. Ever since then we've been buddies.

OT: Dave is a really cool guy. If you want to talk about diversity, you gotta go to his shows. You get all types of bands from all types of places. It's a really cool thing happening.

Daryl: OT, how'd you get so deep into tennis?

OT: I guess it all started back home in Bolivia. Started playing when I was eight years old. My dad put me into tennis camps. I continued here until I discovered punk rock when I was fourteen. Then left it. But picked it up again later on.

Daryl: How long ago was that?

OT: Probably around twenty-two or twenty-three I picked it up again.

Daryl: How many times a week do you play?

OT: Well, since I'm an instructor, I teach it everyday. But I may play it three or four times a week.

Daryl: Do you see any parallels between playing tennis and playing the guitar?

OT: Yes and no. Yes in the sense that you really have to know what you're doing and it has to be second nature. It has to be fluid. You can tell a good tennis player who has good technique. You can see how effortlessly they hit the ball. With guitar, it's kinda the same. How effortless you make it seem. How well you play. It's all technique. It's a cool sport. A lot of people are surprised to learn that I play tennis.

Charly: Turbo's thing is "I will ace you." I don't know what it means, but I know it's tennis terminology. [laughs]

OT: It takes a lot of time. That's why a lot of people don't get into it. You have to spend a

look, movement, or attitude?

Ivan: All of the above.

Dirty: Definitely, it's all of them. A lot of people say it's a lifestyle.

Charly: Punk is how you feel, what you do, what you wear, what you say. It seeps into your bones. That's why I haven't tried to be anything but myself. And I just figured out that it's punk that's for me. But it all come through skateboarding, the whole "fuck authority" thing. At a very young age, I knew that authority wasn't cool. And I like making my own things, asking questions, and slipped into some punk rock real quick. Probably the Misfits and never looked back. But it's definitely deep in your bones, a lifestyle, like Dirty said.

Ivan: I think it's whatever you want it to be. There's no certain look, or sound, and a lot of people think you can only listen to punk; if you listen to anything else, that makes you not punk.

Daryl: Ivan, didn't you go to the Berklee College of Music?

Ivan: No, I went to UC Berkeley. [laughs]

Daryl: Did you study music?

Ivan: No. Architecture. [laughs]

Charly: Ivan is the architect of the team. He was the engineer on the first album.

Ivan: Yeah, we made it work.

Daryl: Do you record other bands?

Ivan: I have in the past, just for fun. I guess in our group I was the...

Charly: The sound guy.

Ivan: Yeah, the sound guy, I had a computer. [laughs] That's all you need to record.

Charly: You used to record freestyles and MCs.

Daryl: Oh yeah, there's some rapping on the Pedal Strike album.



Charly: Yeah, there's a little bit of flow.

Daryl: So there's previous experience with rapping before that track?

Charly: Oh yeah!

Ivan: There's a whole album!

Charly: Me and Ivan used to record everything.

Rene: Who would make the beats?

Charly: Ivan would make the beats and I would just spit off the dome.

Daryl: What were your DJ or MC names?

Charly: I was, "MC Verm, penetrate your mind with my rhyme, like a sperm." Ivan made a twenty-eight minute mix called *The Octomix*. So he was already cutting stuff on his own—we would ride bikes, and he would play the beats and I would just spit over them 'til we recorded them one day. So that's out there. You have that somewhere?

Ivan: It's on my fried laptop.

Rene: What do you guys do in terms of employment?

Dirty: I do catering. If you need a wedding or something. I'll play the bass and serve you a sandwich.

Ivan: I do architectural design and graphic design. Stuff along those lines. Try to stay creative and get paid, too. [laughs]

OT: I think I said it earlier, I'm a tennis instructor. And I sling things on Craigslist.

Charly: He's really good at finding the deals. [laughs] I've been doing gymnastics for sixteen years, so I ended up coaching it, 'cause I didn't wanna have a real job. I work for the city as an instructor. I teach at Park and Recs. I have my own gymnastic programs. I also work at Crossfit Mean Streets in Downtown Los Angeles. I coach ages four and up. I'm gymnastics and parkour. That's how I make the cheese.

Daryl: Are you still doing those Monday nights at the park?

Charly: Yeah, 1900 San Fernando Road. Rio de Los Angeles, every Monday night from eight PM to whenever.

Daryl: And what do you do there?

Charly: Oh, we meet at the playground and warm up. There's different ways to warm up, but I like to walk on the rail for a good minute. I start to feel like my hand-eye

coordination is on, and I'll start doing some vaults. The structure is unique. We'll work on absorbing the impact and rolling. And with parkour, there's something new you can do everyday in the same spot. Because you look at it in a different state of mind every time. That's more of a volunteer thing. That's a free service I offer to anyone who wants to learn.

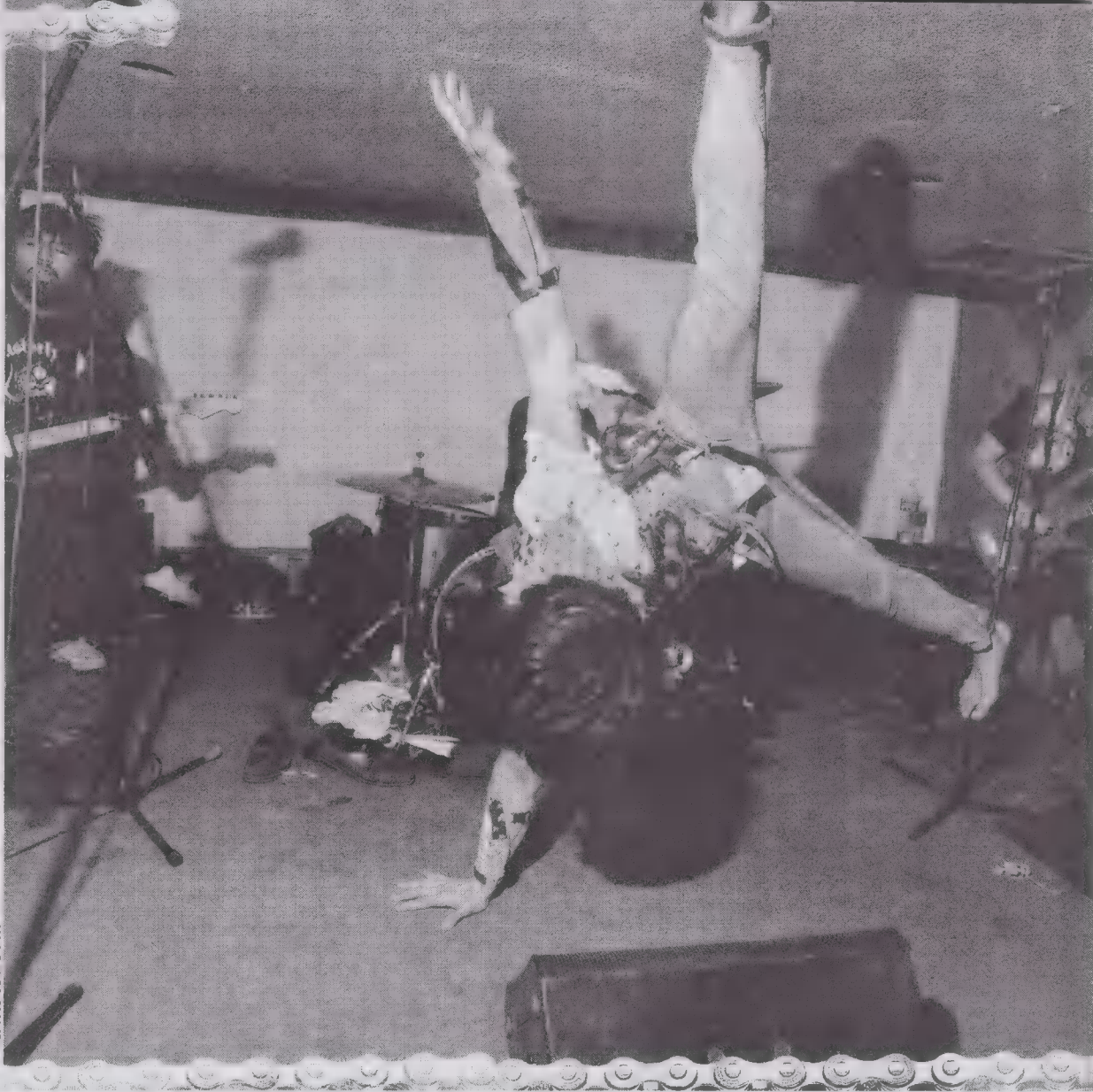
Actually, I wanna keep going, and one day I think I can just be a stunt man—jumping through glass, out of a burning building, into some water. I feel like I can jump from one moving car to another one. Either become a stuntman or join the circus. But Pedal Strike is kind of a circus. [laughs]

Daryl: What is the inspiration for the live Pedal Strike experience? 'Cause I remember the first time I saw you I thought, this must be what it was like to see Bad Brains play.

Charly: Thank you. That's an awesome comparison.

Dirty: Charly is a really good frontman, and those acrobatics he does make it really fun





live show. And I like us a lot better live than listening to our recordings.

Daryl: Was it intentional for it to be that action packed?

Charly: It just popped off! They started playing the riffs! Like I always say, I'm the snake, they're the charmers. I'm just like ■ dragon that's there. They start doing the thing, and it just comes to me and it hurts to hold it back. I gotta express myself in the way that I truly am in my most raw, real, authentic self. People look at that and realize that it's something that they can hear with their ears and see with their eyes. And the audience becomes part of it.

OT: Charly is right. He feeds off the energy of us playing, and he's ■ pretty hyperactive guy. So he's already always going off, whether it's parkour or whatever. When we see him doing all those crazy things, front flip or some crazy shit from the stage...

Daryl: Do you watch the chaos while you're playing?

Dirty: Yeah, I mean, we're in there.

OT: You always gotta stay in the zone and

not fuck up, but you always gotta try and see what's going on.

Dirty: I love watching everyone go crazy.

OT: You never know when Charly is gonna flip. I mean, sometimes I do. [laughs] It's always fun seeing where I am when he's going to flip. And it's pretty crazy when you do see it.

Charly: There have been shows where I've thrown mad, crazy somersaults and I'm like, "Did you guys see it?" And I just stopped asking 'cause they never seemed to see it.

OT: The coolest one was when we did this backyard show put on by some of the guys that run Penniback Records. A lot of their bands played. There was a bunch of young kids. And they built this really sketchy six-foot stage. It was really high up, and I thought it was gonna fall at any minute. And Charly front flipped off that thing a few times. That was pretty crazy. So yeah, it wasn't planned.

Rene: You are all pretty energetic performers. What energy do you feed off of?

Dirty: I feed off of these guys. We all feed off of each other.

Ivan: The music is pretty energetic.

Dirty: It's most exciting when we're playing a show, we're all on point, and everyone is feeling it. And also when we're writing a song, and it's like boom, boom, boom. And I know we're going to get it right at the show. [laughs] That's what I feed off of.

OT: We're pretty energetic whether we have a small crowd or not.

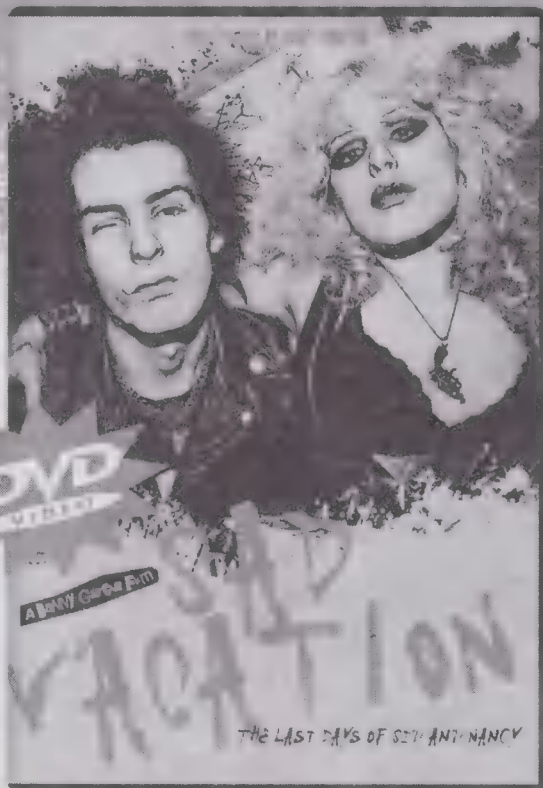
Charly: The smaller the crowd, the more space for me to fuck around.

Daryl: Also, for as many fast, crazy punk songs you have, you also have some slow jams.

Charly: You have to be able to shake your ass, too. And I want other people to shake their hips. I don't just want it to be me. And when they play something a little slower, maybe it'll empower people to come closer rather than further because everyone is pushing each other. It's their turn to dance. Shake it. If you can shake your ass to it, it's gonna be good.

Dirty: That's what I like about jamming with these guys, too. There's a little bit of

SAD VACATION: THE LAST DAYS OF SID AND NANCY



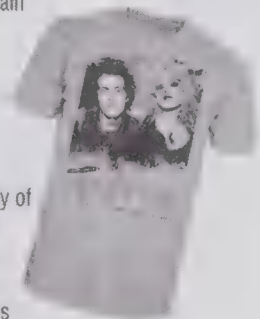
An up close and personal account of the tumultuous and stormy relationship between Sid Vicious and Nancy Spungen

SAD VACATION is the latest documentary film by Danny Garcia ("The Rise and Fall of The Clash"/"Looking for Johnny")

This film holds no punches and reveals the facts through personal friends, insiders and witnesses providing a first-hand account of Sid Vicious and Nancy Spungen's mysterious deaths. Includes interviews with Sylvain Sylvain (New York Dolls), Bob Gruen, Walter Lure (The Heartbreakers), Lee Black Childers, Howie Pyro (D Generation), Kenny Gordon (Pure Hell), Cynthia Ross (The B-Girls) and many more.

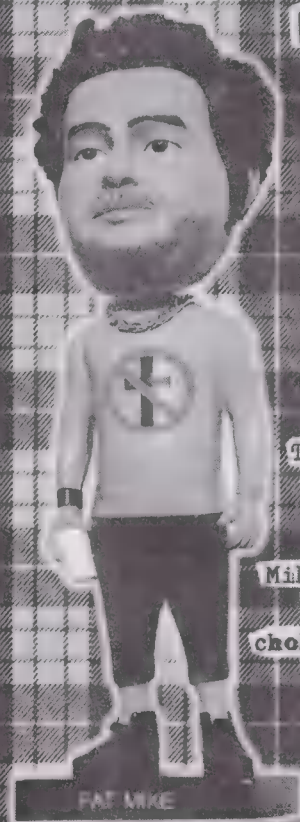
Narrated by Huey Morgan (Fun Lovin' Criminals), **SAD VACATION** contains rare footage and unseen photography of Sid and Nancy, and music from The Heartbreakers, The Boys, The Members, Neon Leon, Pure Hell, Sami Yaffa, Luigi & The Wiseguys, Skafish, Corazones Muertos, The PrimaDonna Reeds, Supla, Silke Berlinn & The Addictions and Sid Vicious himself.

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**Bringing the music to the people,
man. That's the funnest part.
You bring the community together.**

each genre in there. Charly is good with the flows and hip hop, Ivan has a good musical ear all around, OT has the punk, garage, and rock 'n roll riffs, and I've played a bunch of guitar. So I just wanna play the bass and play ■ bunch of fills. [laughs] And hopefully I'll hit the right note at the right time.

Charly: And Dirty can sing like ■ motherfucker. Like if we were NSYNC, he's JT. [laughs]

Dirty: I don't know which one that is.

Rene: I do. Justin Timberlake.

Daryl: The cute one.

Rene: The cute one with the frosted tip curls.

Daryl: OT, I know you set up a lot of shows. A lot of bands don't do that. A lot of bands just sit around and wait to be offered shows. But you are very active when it comes to setting stuff up.

OT: For sure. That's something I've learned from punk rock and DIY. Even back in high

school, I've always had that role. Setting up the shows. Whether it was a backyard show or at a venue, that's where I learned it. Networking with other bands, putting shows together. I took all that, put it into Pedal Strike, and took it to the next level. I'm older, a little wiser. And then all the help I'm getting from the rest of the band. Ivan does ■ lot of our art. Making us look good. Everyone else, whether it's putting out posters or flyers. We're ■ team. I like putting cool shows together.

Dirty: And thank you OT. 'Cause they're fun shows.

Charly: Shout out to OT.

Rene: What would you say your biggest goal is as a band?

OT: Just bringing the music to the people, man. That's the funnest part. You bring the community together.

Dirty: And giving them ■ place to go.

OT: Yeah, a place to go and see different bands. Not just us, but other people.

Charly: Jumpstarting the scene and having fun.

OT: And inspiring other people, other kids. Our brothers, they're younger than us. They're starting their own bands. Dirty's brother started Akrid. My brother is in a band called the River Boys. They've all played with us. It was them seeing early Pedal Strike. They thought, "We could do this too." And that's cool. Getting other kids to pick up instruments and do their thing.



RAZORCAKE 65

~~The Fur Coats~~



The Fur Coats

Marc Ruvolo is a luminary in Chicago punk. Founder of the hardcore band No Empathy, he was influential in the development of that scene in the 1980s. As co-founder of Johann's Face Records, Marc was involved in early releases by bands such as Alkaline Trio and the Smoking Popes. Coming out as gay in the early 1990s inadvertently made Marc an important part of an emerging homocore scene that helped reshape the landscape of North American punk. From being an active musician, overseeing a minor but influential label, and running Bucket O'Blood Books and Records, Marc was an institution in Chicago for many decades.

Recently, Marc relocated to Austin, Texas, taking his band Fur Coats with him. The Fur Coats' 2014 release **The League of Extraordinary Octopuses** is a masterful blend of melodic pop punk and darkly twisted humor. Originally a solo-plus-rotating-cast-of-friends project, the relocated Fur Coats has solidified into a solid trio with the addition of veteran drummer Craig Nichols (of Guided By Voices, The Method, and a hundred other bands) and youngster Jake Figallo on bass. I met up with the Fur Coats before their set at Awesome Fest. We headed around the corner to a small bar, where Marc started telling stories before I even had a chance to get my recorder out. Noting that **Razorcake's** editor Todd Taylor started out at **Flipside**, Marc was already telling stories about Al Flipside by the time I hit "record"...



Marc Ruvolo—Guitar, vocals
Craig Nichols—Drums
Jake Figallo—Bass

Interview by Kevin Dunn
Photos by Paul Silver and Patrick Houdek
Artwork by Marc Ruvolo
Layout by Eric Baskauskas

Kevin: So you were talking about how you made an ass of yourself to Al Flipside.

Marc: No Empathy was playing in L.A.—this is in the mid-'90s. I know *Flipside* and I love *Flipside*, but I didn't know Al by face. I'm at a pool party, and we've done a bunch of coke. We're just partying after the show. We had played Spaceland? I don't know where the hell we played. But I'm talking to this guy, and he's like, "Yeah, I got this zine, and I really don't know what to do with it." I'm telling him all this super basic shit. "Maybe you should do this," thinking I'm helping some dude out that Xeroxes his zine or whatever. Then at the end, I'm like, "What's the name of the zine?" He's like, "*Flipside*." I'm like, "What? What are you letting me go on and on for?" [laughter]

Marc: I felt like such an idiot. I just kind of ghosted away.

Kevin: Was he laughing at you?

Marc: Yeah. He was kind of chuckling. I'm like, "Dude!" [laughter]

Kevin: How long have you been playing music?

Marc: The first No Empathy show was '84 in Chicago. Prior to that, I was in a really short-lived band called Gross National Product in '83, with two other people—two girls, Lori (Steinberg) and Lori (Peters). [laughs] They kicked me out.

Kevin: Why'd they kick you out?

Marc: They just didn't like the way I sang, I guess? I don't know. They kicked me out, and so the bass player's like, "Fuck this, fuck

them. We're going to go and start another band." We started No Empathy. I needed to book a show because we couldn't get a show anywhere. We had no demo. We had no anything.

I called a YWCA in the Loop. I said to them, "Hey, you guys got a party room. Can we rent your party room for a birthday party?" It was super shitty, it was like, on Lake Street. They were like, "Yeah. It's a hundred bucks." I'm like, "Oh, fantastic... and we're going to probably have a band. Is it all right if I bring a PA in?" They were like, "Uh, yeah, I guess that's fine." Then we did a five-band show. That was the first No Empathy show. It ended in a brawl with Nazi skinheads as we played the AC/DC song "TNT." There was a bunch of Nazis in Chicago at that point.

Kevin: You invited them to the birthday party? [laughter]

Marc: No, they would just come to any show.

Jake: Come one, come all!

Marc: They were an organization called Romantic Violence. It was this guy, Clark Martell. He would just come to shows and they would pass out shit. They weren't passing out anything there and we didn't really know who they were, and at the end, it just turned into this fucking brawl. That show was No Empathy, a band called Blatant Dissent—who turned into Tar.

Kevin: Oh, nice. I love Tar.

Marc: Then a band called Impulse Manslaughter. Impulse Manslaughter were awesome. It was a super fun show—we fought

those Nazis at every show after that, because we had a black guitarist, a Hispanic bass player, a gay singer, and Czechoslovakian drummer. [laughter]

Kevin: You're covering almost all of the bases for the Nazis. [laughter]

Marc: Romantic Violence. We started bringing weapons to shows. Iggy, the bass player, would just put all the weapons in his bass case. It would just be a brawl all the time.

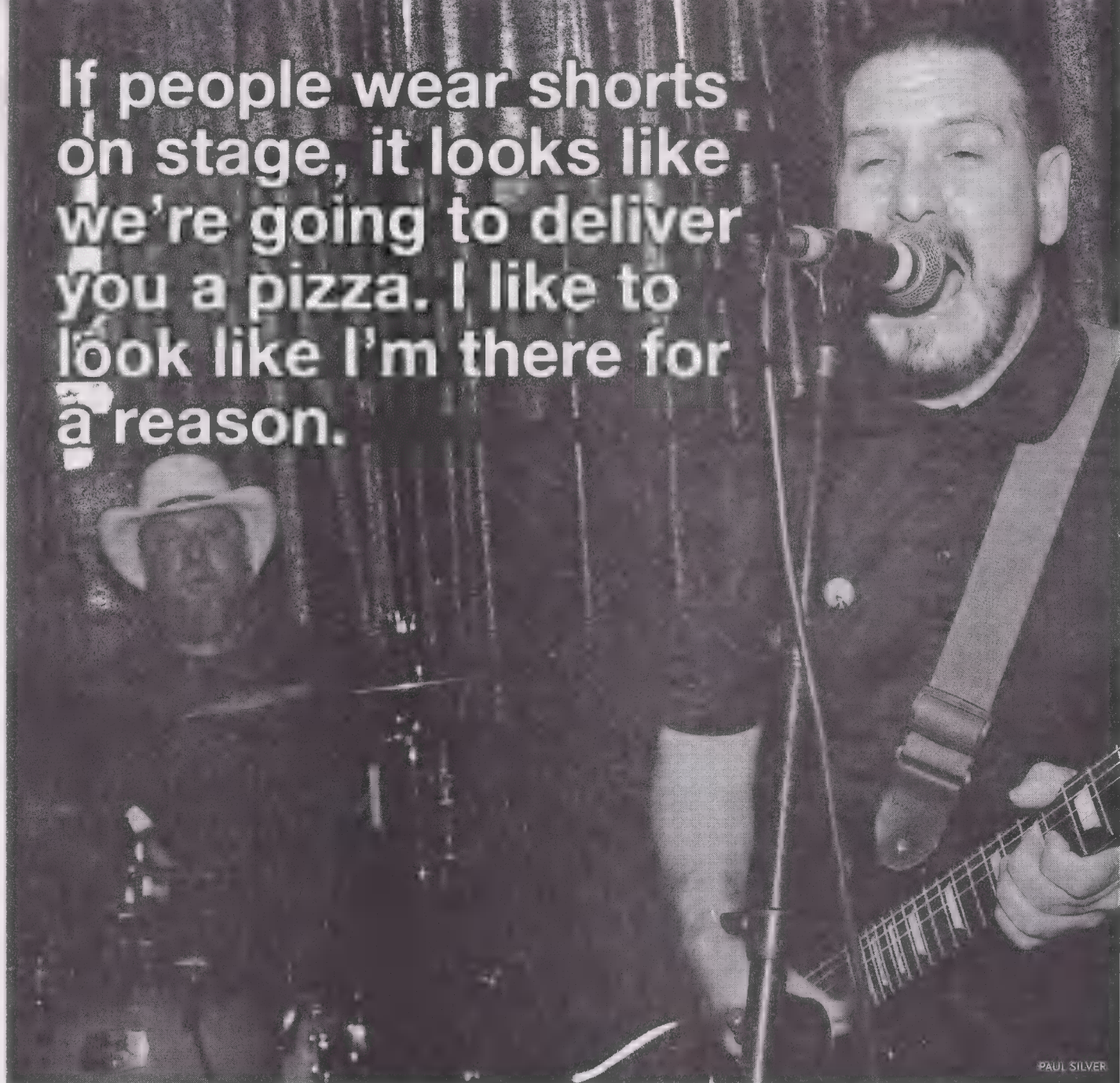
Kevin: When you say, "weapons," are you talking about tire irons?

Marc: Yeah, just tire irons, chains, brass knuckles, and stuff. Just as soon as they'd come to the show, we would just confront them and be like, "Fuck you. You can't be here. We don't want you here." Then we'd fight them out. Eventually, the cops would come wherever we were playing. The cops were like, "Well, you can kill them, or you could just call us every single time." [laughter] The cops were like, "I'm sure they have records. If it's a gang already, we have our gang crimes unit." We just started calling the cops as soon as they got there at shows.

Kevin: So you opted not to kill them? [laughter]

Marc: Yeah. The Chicago cops were like, "Just kill them." We're talking like '84. Chicago was a fucked up, abandoned place in '84. Wicker Park was like tumbleweeds going down the fucking street. There were packs of wild dogs around. We lived in a place where we didn't pay rent at all. We just

If people wear shorts on stage, it looks like we're going to deliver you a pizza. I like to look like I'm there for a reason.



PAUL SILVER

squatted. Yeah. [laughs] It was ■ different time, as they say.

We fought those guys for a while and then they stopped coming around, but they did other stuff. They got bigger and bigger. Eventually that dude, Clark Martell, he went to jail. Somebody tried to leave their organization—a girl—and they broke into her apartment, beat her, and put her in the hospital. They wrote *Romantic Violence* on the wall in her blood, or something like that. I don't know the exact story, but he went to jail after that. That kind of dissipated their thing. As everybody fought back at the Nazis, they all moved out to Indiana.

Kevin: That was mid-'80s scene?

Marc: Yeah. That was ■ desolate time. Punk rock had turned into crossover. In the

late '80s you had DRI and crossover. There wasn't any place to play.

Kevin: I'm thinking, in terms of Chicago, it was the heyday for Naked Raygun and Big Black.

Marc: They all were bar bands; that's the thing. Big Black was broken up. Naked Raygun were just a bar band that would play all the time. The Effigies were trying to be college rock at that point. All there was was the hardcore scene, which is what Articles Of Faith had kind of started. There was us, Articles Of Faith, and a few other good ones. Have you seen *You Weren't There*? We're the ones who came in '84 that whole old guard hate. Little kids who just want to drink and have fun. [laughter] Every place we would do ■ show, it would just get wrecked right away.

It would be metalheads. We had ■ thing in Chicago called the Goons. The Goons would always come. They'd fucking bust a window out and put cases through at whatever bar we were in. Get high and fight. Just wreck everything. There were tons of skins who weren't Nazis, but they were just as bad.

It was hell. We would do shows and we got wrecked every time. We all were like, "You guys are ruining the scene. You've got to just chill out, so we can have ■ place to play. Do shows, blah, blah, blah." Sometimes we harped on that so much that the scene actually became so fucking boring by the mid-'90s. We somehow inadvertently invented emo—where people would come to the show, just stand there and cross their arms, and do nothing.

[laughter] We bitched so much that we got rid of the crazy, fun edge of it. We ground the edge off the punk scene.

Kevin: When did the Fur Coats emerge in your evolution?

Marc: I've been in a million bands since No Empathy. Concurrently with No Empathy, I did Chia Pet, which was a full-on funk band. That was like a mixture of James Brown and Queen. It was super fun, because there were a lot more women in that scene. It was less macho, you know what I mean? I wasn't out of the closet yet then, either. It was just way more fun to do. It was the same rhythm section in No Empathy as in Chia Pet.

Kevin: Really? I didn't know that.

Marc: Same guys. It was their side band, and they asked me to be in it because we all loved funk: Parliament, Funkadelic, James Brown. Those guys were really, really into that. There was a big funk scene at that time, actually. There were the Tar Babies, the Blue Meanies. Sludgeworth was doing funk, even if they won't fucking admit it nowadays. When Lookout re-released the Sludgeworth record, they cut all the funk songs out of it. I think they were just so embarrassed that they were doing funk.

We used to have super fun dance parties. I remember once when Victory Records was really just starting out, we played a Victory Records show where dudes were wearing letterman jackets with "Straight Edge" on the back. It was all fucking tough guys. Chia Pet is on the show, and these dudes were like slamming to the hardcore bands and they would give their letterman jackets to their girlfriends to stand on the sidelines to hold while the bands played. We were like, "God, this is such bullshit."

We get up there and I'm like, "This goes out to all the ladies! Come on, let's get up front! I want to see you dancing!" And all the women are like, "Yeah!" and they all come running up front and we have a big dance party. The guys are like, "I guess it ain't too bad, it's all right. They like it." Just bullshit, but funny.

I've done so many bands in the interim. I had a band called Doubt and that band was like the Pixies mixed with Sonic Youth. There's a record of that online and that was with a cellist, Kera Schaley. She ended up playing on *In Utero*. She played on "All Apologies," and stuff like that.

Kevin: The '90s were weird. Punk was evolving, and I assume that was true in Chicago, too.

Marc: Yeah, we were just doing whatever. Everybody just did whatever the hell they wanted, really. We were also part of the queercore scene. There was a really big homocore scene in Chicago. Once I came out of the closet, that changed everything.

Kevin: When did you come out?

Marc: That was like, '93. At that point, we were getting super popular and we were playing Metro. We could headline and maybe bring in between five hundred and eight hundred people. All the records were selling really well. Then I came out and it went

errrrrrpp [makes scratching needle sound]. [laughter]

People were saying to my bandmates, "You're in a fag band, man, what the fuck is with that?" They started looking at the lyrics... because a lot of my lyrics were about gay topics. It's just nobody had ever known that I was writing about it before. I have a song about HIV called "Positive." Then all of sudden, it just clicks into place and everybody's like, "Oh my god!"

Even in '93, things were still super ugly. Like when Martin (Sorrondéguy of Los Crudos and Limp Wrist) came out, he got harassed like crazy at some shows. It was horrible. People were fucking assholes. None of my bandmates cared. They were all awesome dudes. It was just the rest of the scene that wasn't ready.

Kevin: Do you think it's better now?

Marc: It's different now.

Kevin: It's different how?

Marc: I kinda feel like I'm on the outside now because it's a young queer scene. I'm too old. I'm a cisgender old gay man. I've been part of a homocore scene for a really long time, but that was then. I go to queer events and they rule. Great bands, great energy. It's maybe just me that's thinking this, but a lot of the times I feel like I'm out of place. I'm older. I'm cisgender. I'm not really part of the new queer scene in general, but that's okay—it doesn't all have to be about me.

I remember going to see Limp Wrist, and it was active dudes going crazy. I was like, "Oh man, this is so awesome!" Martin points me out—"This guy right here! This is one of the original homocore people! He started this whole shit. This is Marc, blah, blah." I was like, "Oh, awesome!" Martin is like, "How many people are gay here?" Three people raise their hands. I'm like, "Haha, everybody is straight here!" [laughter]

Craig: No solidarity. Just pretend, raise your goddamn hand!

Marc: Right, I know. Maybe there were more gay people there who were scared to raise their hand. I'm sure there were a lot more gay people there. It was the weirdest thing. There were dudes singing along, "I love hardcore boys! I love hard boys hardcore!" They're pretty much all straight! [laughter]

So this has just become a niche genre for people to be into. That's fine, but it's weird. Vaginal Davis, a drag queen from L.A.—we were her backing band in Chicago for the homocore shows and did a 7" with her. She was in a band called Black Fag, and also Pedro Muriel and Esther. She lives in Berlin now.

Later on I did Traitors. I was dating the singer and we would make out on stage. That was super funny because kids would come up afterwards, "Oh man, that was so awesome when you guys made out on stage. You were making fun of fags when you did that, right?" I was like, "Uh. How about you and me make out. We'll make fun of fags some more." [laughter]

Kevin: Have you read Jon Ginoli from Pansy Division's book, *Deflowered*?

Marc: Parts of it. Yeah.

Kevin: It's really great. He talks about when they were opening up for Green Day. Most of the audience wants to kill him. Most of them are like, "Wait, are you really gay, are you...?"

Marc: They think it's a shtick.

Kevin: "Oh no, we're gay. I'll prove it with you." [laughter]

Marc: Our bass player used to confuse everybody. He would like to fuck with everybody, because Traitors was just a "fuck you" band. On his bass amp he would have a rainbow flag with a huge swastika on it. People would be like, "I don't know what you're trying to say here?" He was like, "I don't know? What do you think I'm trying to say?" [laughter] "I got to explain everything to you?"

I've been in a billion bands and then about five years ago, me and Davey Houle—the drummer from Das Kapital and from Atari Star, which is my indie rock band that I did for years—started another band just because we wanted to continue to play together. Davey is like my best friend and my ex. That was the genesis of Fur Coats. That was with Devon Kay who's in Direct Hit.

Kevin: What's the evolution of Fur Coats, because these guys here [pointing to Craig and Jake] aren't the original members. So Marc, why can't you keep a band together? Are you the biggest asshole and nobody wants to play with you? [laughter]

Marc: This is the story. Davey didn't want to play drums anymore. He just retired completely. Devon Kay was in Direct Hit and he really didn't have any time, and he moved to Boston. So I didn't have a band anymore. At the time, I'd opened a record/bookstore called Bucket O' Blood Books and Records, and it was a science fiction, fantasy, and horror used book store in Chicago. Vinyl, too.

Kevin: When was that?

Marc: That was 2009.

Kevin: Right in the boom time of bookstores. Everybody was flocking to bookstores and record stores in 2009. [laughter]

Marc: People were saying that to me. They were like, "Argh! What are you doing?"

Kevin: "I'm going to open a typewriter store next." [laughter]

Marc: It was all of the things I loved, essentially. It was a super small store, like 850 square feet. I could just run it by myself. It was open seven days a week. Only took off Christmas. I just sat in there all the time and I just built it up. I started it with seven grand. I used my collection of books and records as the core of the whole thing. I had a little stage to do events in there. I did that for four years.

Then I was like, "I'm going to die in here. I'm getting hugely fat. I'm going to be the comic book guy. They're going to find me passed out in a fucking taco bowl." Also, my appendix had burst, too, while I had it. I spent four days in the hospital. The whole thing was a mess. I was like, "I need to sell this." It was doing well enough—it supported

me and it supported itself. I was getting bigger science fiction writers to come in and read. It was great. I was giving away tickets to events. It was super fun. But can you work 364 days a year for \$35,000 a year?

Kevin: Were you playing music during this time?

Marc: Only locally. I'm like, "God, I still want to tour, I still want to travel." So I sold it. I found people who totally were into it and didn't want to change it. That was a big thing, because a lot of people were like, "Oh, I just want to make it a bookstore." Or, "Oh, I just want to make it a record store." I wanted it to stay Bucket O' Blood, science fiction, fantasy, and horror, and vinyl. [laughs] The new owners kept it exactly as it was. "We're not going to change it at all." It's still there. It's doing really well.

Kevin: After you sold it, what did you start doing?

Marc: That's why this whole thing happened. I didn't have a band so I just started traveling, playing acoustically. I went to the East Coast. I did a few shows with Brain Attack and lots of others. I just went wherever I knew people. I went out with Brick Fight for a couple shows. Then I went to England to try to make some connections over there. I did some shows with Duncan Redmonds from Snuff and then Alex from Wonk Unit. I started to meet people over there and then the next time I went back, I had people who could be my rhythm section, so I would

just fly into Scotland, get a rhythm section, practice, jump in their van, use their gear.

Kevin: And you were playing under the name Fur Coats?

Marc: Fur Coats, yeah. Then I got other people to do stuff over here. I got Kyle Manning, who has been a friend that I've known for years—he's in City Mouse and plays with Murderburgers—to play with me. Johnny Polydoros from Off With Their Heads and Vacation Bible School—he played bass for me. Then my friend Chris Mattern, who is just some dude that I know, a buddy, played bass for me.

My partner makes music as well, kind of laptop electronic music. His band is called Bastardgeist. We wanted to move somewhere outside of Chicago—so we lived in England for four months and were trying to maybe see if we can stay there—but we couldn't get jobs. It's super expensive over there. Then we moved to New York because a friend offered us an apartment there. We lived for a year there. We hated New York. New York was horrible. It's a gorgeous city. Super fun to walk around, but people are assholes.

Kevin: Says the guy from Chicago. [laughter]

Marc: Seriously, people are meaner there than Chicago. Everything costs a fortune and is set up to steal your money. Really, it's just set up to Hoover the money out of your wallet. Fuck that.

Kevin: You moved to Austin a year ago?

Marc: A year ago. Super cheap. When I got to Austin I was like, "All right, I want Fur Coats to become a real band again."

Kevin: I got to stop you, though, because you just said, "Moving to Austin was super cheap." Everyone I know down there talks about how Austin is a fucking expensive.

Marc: It's just the situation. In New York I was paying almost two thousand in rent. In Austin we're paying three hundred bucks a piece for a room. It's just way better. Once I got there, I wanted to make Fur Coats a more real going concern. That's why I found these guys. They're awesome. We're going to record an album hopefully next year. Craig is a badass drummer. He's an old soul. I met him and it's like we're brothers from another mother. He came from Dayton, Ohio and he's been in a million bands.

Kevin: I know you're currently a tattoo artist, but you played with Guided By Voices for a while, right?

Craig: I did, yeah. More recently, though, Robthebank, and a band called Belringer with Mark Deutrom from The Melvins.

Kevin: How many Guided By Voices songs can you play right now? Couple hundred? [laughter]

Craig: Actually, I did a tour with them for *Alien Lanes*. My band, The Method, shared a practice space with them and their drummer had to go to jail for something. They were getting ready to go on tour and they were like, "Hey man, this tour starts in like two days. If you can learn forty songs in two days, we can do this tour. Otherwise we're not going to go. No pressure." [laughter] I learned those songs, we did that tour, and everything went good.

Kevin: How long did you play for Guided By Voices. Just that tour?

Craig: I did that tour and then that guy got out of jail and came back. Then he did something else and then went to jail again, fucked his back up, and had to have surgery. I re-joined the band, did some more touring. Me and my whole band The Method were spare parts for Guided By Voices. When any of those guys would get hurt or go to jail, they would take a guy from my band. This was like, '95 through '97.

I was always a fan and I knew the songs, but I never knew what they were called. Bob does that Joey Ramone thing, "This song is called this. One, two, three, four." And then I'm in front of a thousand people and it was like live Name That Tune. After three or four notes I'd be like, "Oh, yeah, I know this song." It's fucking great, man. [laughter]

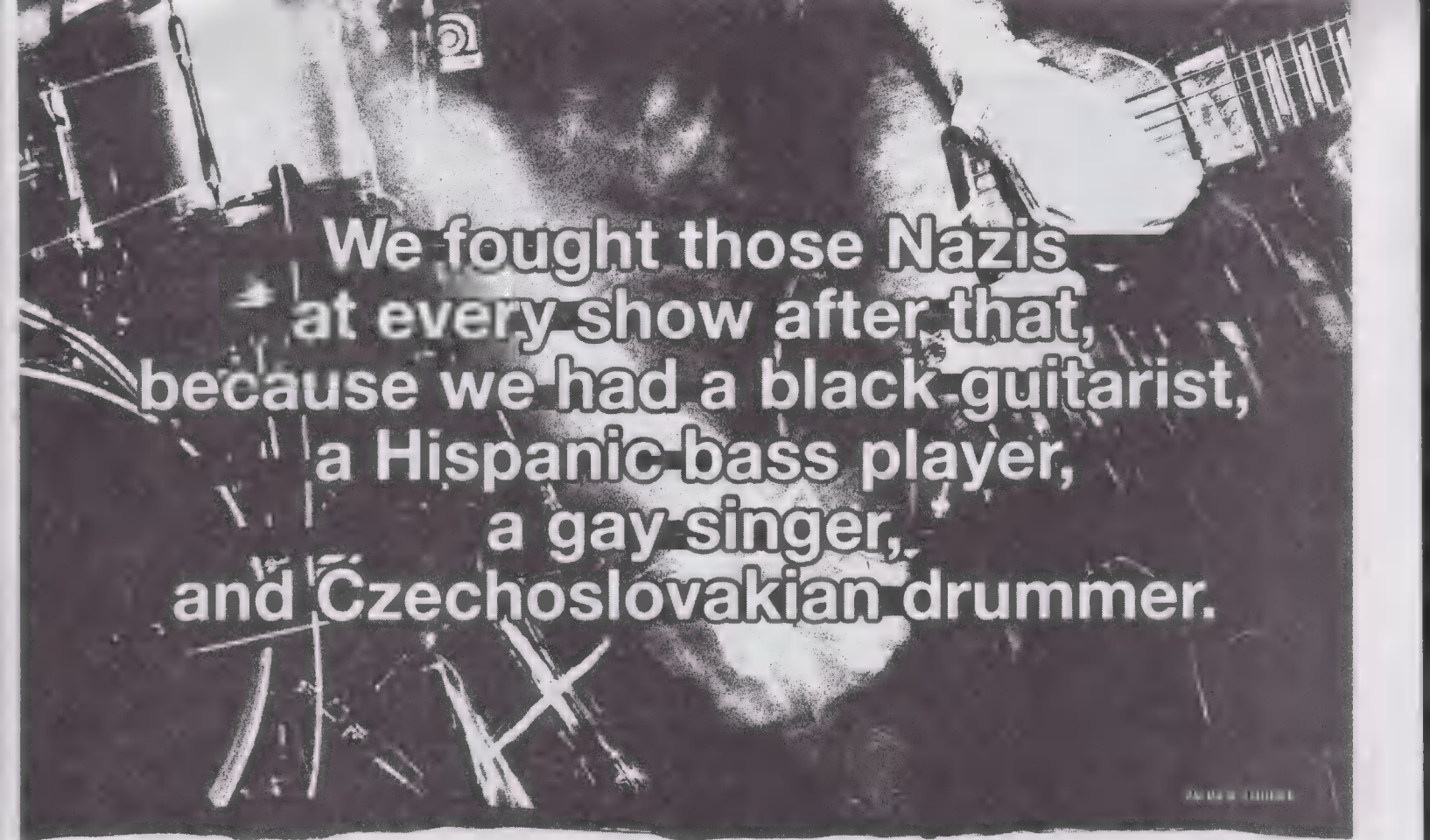
I've been in like, nine million bands since the '80s, too. Finally, I met Marc and all of our stories can be linked back to the same people.

Marc: We can't believe we never met. That's the weirdest thing. We know all the same people.

Craig: We ran in the same circles since the '80s and never met each other.

Marc: He's been in a bunch of bands. Let's Crash, O-Matic, and now he's in the crappy Fur Coats. [laughter]





We fought those Nazis
at every show after that,
because we had a black guitarist,
a Hispanic bass player,
a gay singer,
and Czechoslovakian drummer.

Kevin: Now that you're in Austin, has the process of writing Fur Coats songs changed now that you've got Craig and Jake bringing stuff in?

Marc: It is changing it a little bit, because the drummer on *League of Extraordinary Octopuses* is Davey and Davey loves to play super simple beats, whereas Craig's just a super rock'n'roll drummer. He's an awesome drummer. It has definitely mutated a little bit. I really want to give these guys a stake in the band. I don't want it to be me alone. That's bullshit. I'm not interested in it just being me. I don't want to be a solo artist. It's too much pressure being a solo artist. I hate playing acoustically. Nobody wants to see the acoustic guy. [laughs]

Kevin: Jake, what do you do in terms of work outside of the band?

Jake: I'm a window cleaner by trade during the daytime hours. I have an engineering degree for sound engineering doing live sounds, not studio, but I refuse to get into that in Austin. It's just a soul sucking experience, in that city at least.

Marc: I work for one of the biggest corset companies in the country, Timeless Trends. We sell cosplay corsets and all that stuff. Super small company, it's me and three other people.

Kevin: You're making corsets?

Marc: I don't make them. We just sell them. We have a factory in Thailand where the owner is and they make them. I do the shipping and receiving and I help with

the marketing. The manager of this corset company knew No Empathy and is from Schaumburg, Ill., and hired me essentially because I was in No Empathy.

Kevin: He's cool with you taking time off for touring?

Marc: Yeah. It's a very chill company. I totally lucked into it. I'm getting paid really well and I get paid vacation and stuff like that. He's like, "Whenever you need to go away it's totally cool." We do really big business in October for Halloween, and he's like, "Just don't leave in October." Otherwise, he's like, "Do whatever you need to do."

Craig: In Austin, most owners of any company will be like, "You in a band? I understand." They tend to be very understanding.

Marc: It's the only city in the country that will give musicians health insurance.

Craig: It's called HAAM.

Kevin: Yeah, I know Ben Snakepit has relied on it for some of his medical expenses.

Marc: I love Snake Pit comics. I have a Snake Pit T-shirt I was just wearing yesterday.

Kevin: I love Ben. I've known Ben for several years but I've actually never physically met Ben.

Marc: That's like us. When we were walking over here, the guys were asking me how I know you and I was like, "I don't really know. We've never actually met."

Jake: But you guys walked right up to each other.

Marc: I know what he looks like because of Facebook. It's so weird, but that's the scene.

That's what's awesome about the scene. I go overseas and I meet people I've never met before and they're fucking amazing. I was in France and we were playing with Chestnut Road—I don't know if you know them, just a fucking great band from Toulouse, France. They're just the same as goddamn everybody in America. They're into all the same things.

Kevin: It's a shared language.

Marc: Right. They're talking about Allied Records. I was like, "Allied Records?!" I just played with Navel from Japan. Those guys were like, "You were in No Empathy." I'm like, "Wow, yeah. You guys know me?"

"Yeah!" It was totally awesome. That was amazing to me because Navel is a fucking great band that I've been listening to them since the '90s. They don't know who the hell I am, but they knew immediately when I came in. It's a phenomenal scene. We played a punk space last night in Tucson, which was just a warehouse. Young, young kids...

Jake: Skateboard ramps. Skateboarding while we played.

Craig: Skateboarding in a wheelchair while we played.

Kevin: Get the fuck out.

Craig: Yeah, up the ramp in a wheelchair. I got a wheel to the back of the head. [laughter]

Marc: I was talking to a twenty-year-old kid who was asking, "How do you tour so much? How do you go and play? I just want to go places and play." I'm like, "I just know people. Once you get into the scene then these



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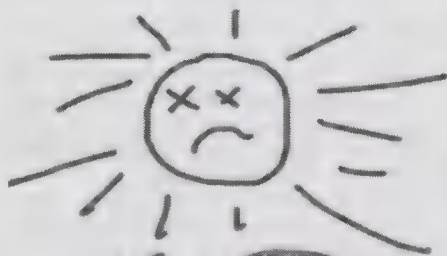
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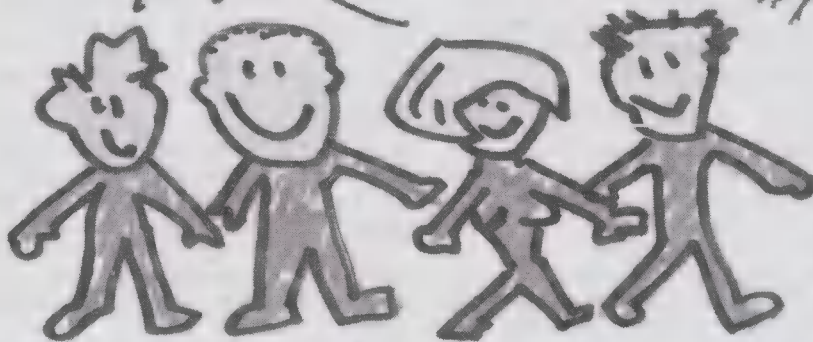


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I AM GOING TO CUT MY DICK OFF
 AND THROW IT AT THE SUN.



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people are your friends just by association, and you meet the people." I've been playing for thirty-five years, so I know a lot of people when I go places, and even if I don't, I know people who know people who vouch for me and say, "Hey, he's a good guy."

When I go there, though, immediately I say, "Hey, thank you. You come to me now and I'll take care of you. You want to see Chicago? Want to see Austin? I'll show you the whole fucking thing. Stay in my house." Know what I mean? That's what it is and that's beautiful. That goes all the way back to my YWCA show, [laughs] that first show where I lied to those people and did my first DIY show. Because that's DIY, lying to get it done.

Kevin: This whole idea about touring is interesting because, again, I'm interested in how bands make it work in 2016.

Jake: Credit cards.

Marc: I told these guys, too. "Hey, I'm keeping an income and expenses list so you can see how much money we lose." You can see at the end how much of a loss this actually is. To make it work, you just work jobs and plan. I'm really good with money. All my bands in the past, I've always had a band fund going up for it. Then I would talk to the band members and say, "Is this going to work for you or is it going to be a massive stress fuckup for you?"

If the bass player says, "Hey, it's going to be a financial stress for me," I'd be, "Okay, what's the minimum you need here to make this better?" Usually it's only three to five hundred dollars, really. I'm like, "Okay, we're three months, four, five months out. Let's figure out how to find that money and put that aside for you so that the stress is gone," so we don't have to go out and be, "Fuck, I'm fucked. I can't have fun because I'm fucked."

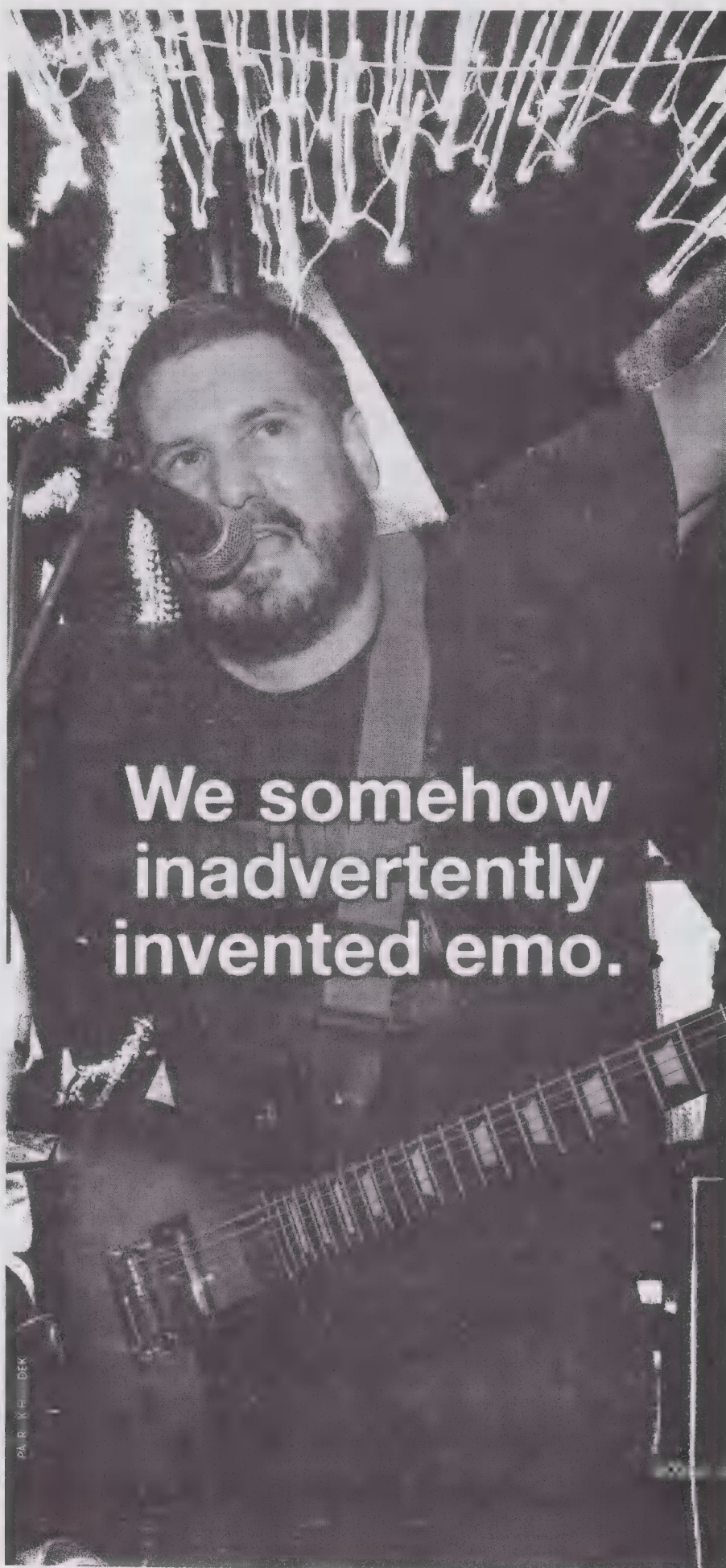
Craig: The key term is sacrifice. That's how you make it happen. You have to be willing to sacrifice something. You can't just go full tilt, "I'm always going to be giving one hundred percent."

Kevin: What do you guys sacrifice to play music regularly with Marc?

Craig: My whole thing is I can take time off pretty much whenever I need to play. As long as I'm working, I make pretty decent money in Austin tattooing. If I'm not there, I just don't get paid. As long as I know enough in advance, I can do it.


Jake: These are minor sacrifices in the realm of sacrifices you can make. I've been married for two years and I'm leaving my wife at home for the first time for the longest amount. It's a small sacrifice, but financially it's a week off from work. It's not coming in at the beginning of the month when rent is due. That's about as big as it gets, honestly—I mean as far as sleeping on an air mattress or floor, that's not a sacrifice anymore. That's par for the course.

Craig: Me and my wife have been together for over twenty years and I've been in like ten different bands who have done this. She makes pretty decent money, too, and




We somehow
inadvertently
invented emo.

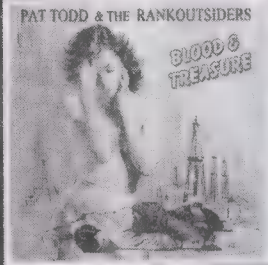
THE NUGGETS OF TOMORROW UNEARTHED TODAY!



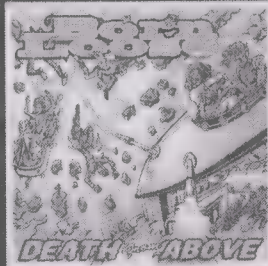
BRAT FARRAR
«Being With You» 7"




LOVESORES
«Rock And Roll Animal» 10"




PAT TODD & THE RANKOUTSIDERS
«Blood & Treasure» LP



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«Death From Above» 10"



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she just loves how I roll. I'll tell her we're going on tour and she's like, "See you later, motherfucker." [laughter] I leave for a few weeks, I come home, and we're happy to see each other.

Marc: It is hard, because I'm fifty years old and I don't have a retirement fund. I've good health now, I guess, but my family lives ■ really long time—into their nineties—so I'm just going to have to work forever.

Kevin: Your record label's not going to take care of you?

Marc: Hell no. [laughter] Johann's Face is so hysterical. The guy who I started it with, Gar Brandt—once we looked at it and figured it all out—"We lost ■ quarter of a million dollars on this label over all the years." I'm like, "Where the hell did we get ■ quarter of a million dollars to begin with?" [laughter]

It was just over time, working jobs. We were movers. We worked at Grabel Movers. We worked in a wine company. We did whatever jobs we possibly could. We worked at hot dog stands and all the shit just went into records. All the money from the record just went back in. It was only in the mid-'90s that we lived off of it, when there was money.

Kevin: That small window in the 1990s.

Marc: That small window of the glory days where there was money. Smoking Popes, Alkaline Trio. Other than that, it's just ■ loss. There's a little bit of digital money here and there that comes in that I pay out to people.

Kevin: So Marc, I understand that you have ■ rule about wearing pants on stage and never wearing shorts on stage. What's up with that, man?

Marc: I don't know. Shorts, I just feel like, I'm in AC/DC, for one... [laughter] Also, it just doesn't feel real. I feel like it takes away

from seeming somewhat professional. It's like, if people wear shorts on stage, it looks like we're going to deliver you ■ pizza. You know what I mean? I like to look like I'm there for ■ reason.

Craig: I go on air condition basis. If they use air conditioning, I'll wear pants.

Marc: He sweats like buckets. [laughter] Pants is ■ Austin thing, too. Even in really bad heat, everybody wears pants in Austin.

Kevin: Really?

Craig: Long sleeve flannel, pants, it doesn't matter.

Jake: Shorts, to me, say shitty metal bands. [laughter]

Kevin: Are there other rules that you have ■ Fur Coats?

Marc: Yeah, no flip flops. [laughter]

Jake: No acid.

Marc: No acid before we play, yeah.

Kevin: Is the no acid rule because of a learning curve?

Jake: Craig came to practice fucking tripping the other day. It was really weird. [laughter]

Marc: He didn't make one mistake. I'll give that to him. If you start fucking up, then we're going to say something.

Craig: I was tripping balls and it felt great.

Marc: I don't care what you do as long ■ you can play. Because, ultimately, we're there to play. I can drink any fucking time I want. I can kill myself with alcohol, but I'm only on that stage for twenty-five to thirty minutes. I might as well try to do my best.

That's one of our rules. One of our ethos. They're like, "We're up there. Let's try to play the best that we can." Some people who played with me, they would get to the bar and just start fucking pounding, get on stage, and suck! What do we practice for? You might as well try to play good at least, right? I

don't know. I suck at playing. I'm a shitty guitarist. I'm ■ pretty shitty singer. I just want to try. Because it's all dumb and you're just laughing at it anyway.

Kevin: Rock'n'roll is dumb. [laughter]

Marc: It is dumb. I've never been successful. Every time I've gotten close to mainstream success, or any type of success, I've completely fucked it up, completely destroyed it. I don't know if I sabotage it—every time they're like, "The door is open, kiss the ass!" I just bite it. [laughter]

Kevin: Nice.

Marc: I'm like, "Ah, no. I want to bite that goddamn ass right now. Fuck you." [laughter] I fuck it up. I have such a hard time doing it. We were talking about that window in the 1990s and Capitol were like, "We want the Smokin' Popes, but we want to buy your label too. We want Johann's Face to be ■ subsidiary of Capitol." I asked if I'd get to put out the bands that I want and they're like, "No, we would bring you bands, and you'll really have no say. But you would have a huge salary. We'd give you stock in Capitol Records." I'm like, "No! I can't. Argh. That sounds wonderful but no, I cannot fucking ever do that in my life. Because you're going to bring me shitty bands and people are going to go 'Marc, why are you putting out these shitty bands?'"

Every time I was like, "I'm going to write something that's going to fit into a scene," it never comes out that way. It comes out as this warped, twisted garbage. [laughter] I like fucked up things. I don't like boring things. I would rather see ■ messed up place with kids doing messed up stuff and having fun, than somebody going through the motions to make their twenty-five grand ■ year off their band. It's boring.



Because that's DIY,
lying to get it done.

TOP FIVES

RAZORCAKE



Gabie Gonzalez

Adel Souto

- Ladrón, *La Fuerza* demo CS
- Bib, *Pop 7"* EP
- Coil, *The Ape of Naples* 2 x 12" reissue
- Death Grips, *Bottomless Pit* 12" LP
- Sightlines, *North* 12" LP

Andy Garcia

1. Leather Towel, *IV* LP
2. Deathly, Self-titled CS
3. Beta Boys, *After Dark 7"*
3. Mark Cone, *Mark Cone Sings 7"*
5. Haram, *What Do You See? 7"*

Art Ettinger

- The Sussed, *The Chesterfield Years* 10"
- ANTISEEN, *The Southern Hostility Demos* LP
- S.L.I.P., *Slippy When Wet* LP
- The Brass, *Short Cuts* CD
- Pale Angels, *Daydreaming Blues* LP

Billy Kostka

- Uranium Club, *Who Made the Man? 7"*
- Acrylics, *Acrylics* 12"
- WOODBOOT, *Krang Gang* LP
- Mommy, *Songs about Children* LP
- Angel, *2017* LP

Cahnie Galletta

Top 5 Live Albums off the Top of My Head While Eating Sushi and Drinking Sake...

1. Liveage, *Decendents*
2. First Avenue Live, *Dillinger 4*
3. Evilive, *Misfits*
4. Americans Abroad, *Against Me!*
5. SkaFunkRastapunk, *Skankin' Pickle*

Candace Hansen

Top Five Take-Aways from 2016

- #BlackLivesMatter past, present, and forever.
- Queer communities are precious and magical and our music is fucking powerful.

• "Music is gonna get good and political again" is bullshit. Good music has been political for years. Ask any DIY band that's not made up of all straight white dudes.

- Never underestimate what fear can make people do and believe.
- There is power in acts of resistance. The folks at Standing Rock know that, they also know that revolution is not built on any single win alone.

Chad Williams

Top 5 Records of 2016

1. Descendents, *Hypercaffium Spazzinate* LP
2. Vanity, *Don't Be Shy* LP
3. Against Me!, *Shape Shift with Me*
4. Gygax, *Critical Hits* LP
5. Drakulas, *Raw Wave* LP

Chris Mason

1. Spectres, *Utopia* LP
2. Red Dons, *Public Eye, Dark/Light, The Stops at The Know*
3. Alice Bag at The Know
4. Drakulas, *Raw Wave* LP
5. Ex-Cult, *Negative Growth* LP

Chris Terry

- The Du-Rites, *J-Zone and Pablo Martin Are LP*
- Bleached, *Welcome the Worms* LP
- Sweet Shop Boyz, *Cashmere* LP
- Kayla Sargeson, *First Red* (poetry book)
- Writing my first full-on *Razorcake* article in a decade

Clara Luci Acosta

1. Western Settings and Dead to Me, *I Wanna Die in Los Angeles* EP release show at the Hi-Hat
2. Tranny: *Confessions of Punk Rock's Most Infamous Anarchist Sellout* by Laura Jane Grace
3. Zach Quinn solo show at The Redwood Bar. He's really fuckin' nice.
4. Against Me!, *Bad Religion*, and NOFX at Ye Scallywag!

5. Dustin, Marty, Griffin, Kevin, Devin, Bruno, Eden, Jack, Chicken, and everyone else who makes the scene a fun and safe place to be. You guys rule.

Craven Rock

1. Any resistance to all this fucking fascism!
2. Continuing positive effects of Ayahuasca ceremonies
3. Leonard Cohen's legacy, Rest in Power. His words meant so fucking much to me!
4. Angry fucking punk. Angry fucking hip hop!
5. Sherman Alexie's overwhelming emotional "reading" at Elliot Bay the day after election

Cynthia Pinedo

- Top Five Dream Jobs I Wanted Growing Up
- Punk-O-Rama compilation creator.
 - Work on a Nickelodeon game show.
 - Merch girl on tour.
 - Photographer at shows.
 - Marine biologist.

Daryl Gussin

- The Nopes, *Never Heard of It*
- Fiscal Spliff, *This Too Shall Pass*, and live
- Box Fan, *Are We Even Try*, and live
- Erica Freas, *Patient Ones*
- The Ergs!, *Godddamn Death Dedication 7"*

Eden Kittiver

1. Dead To Me's EP Release Show at The Hi Hat
2. Cloud Nothings, *Internal World*
3. Joyce Manor, *Cody*
4. Photographing Turnstile side stage at The Teragram Ballroom
5. Writing my first top 5 list for the coolest DIY punk rock magazine out there

Eric Baskauskas

- Worse, *Rubber Burner*
- Heat 7"
- Hospital Job, *Never Get Cold*
- Impalers, *Cellar Dweller* promo tape
- Beach Impediment joins Bandcamp

1. Ah Fuck
2. Human Behavior
3. Whitman
4. The Paranoids
5. Fernando And The Teenage Narcs

Garrett Barnwell

1. The Nods, *Chromatic Recollections 7"*
2. Fashionism, *Subculture Suicide 7"*
3. Captain Beyond, Self-titled LP
4. Sparks, *Angst in my Pants* CD
5. Voice Of Doom, *Screams from Space* CD

George Lopez

- C.C.T.V., *7" Piece of Paper & Audio Cassette Tape*, and live at E7th
- Belgrado, live at Union
- Black Randy And The Metro Squad, *Pass the Dust I Think I'm Bowie* CS
- Meeting new Razorcake folks at RC spitball, 11/20/16
- P22, demo tape

Griffin Wynne

Top Five Reasons We Will Always Need DIY Venues

1. To provide safer spaces for women, queers, gender non-conforming and POC artists to share their work, without risk of tokenization or commodification.
2. To make music more accessible to marginalized communities.
3. Trump.
4. To make space for healing, pain, liberation, and community.
5. Because DIY is invincible.

Jimmy Alvarado

- *My Damage*, book by Keith Morris and Jim Ruland
- Lysa Flores and Alice Bag's respective live sets at Self-Help Graphics' annual Dia de los Muertos event 11/2/16.
- Suicide, Self-titled LP
- Couteau Latex, *Hostile Environment 7"*
- La Tuva's continued existence

Jim Joyce

- Dave Roche spinning the platters that matter on *Who's Got the Pox?* a punk podcast

DIY IS

invincible

- Pittsburgh rockers Calyx blowing the roof off a Westside Chicago garage on a frigid weeknight.
- *What We Loved Was Not Enough*, zine by Ed Blair
- *Minor Leagues Two*, zine by Simon Moreton
- White Reaper, *White Reaper Does It Again*

Jim Woster

- Five Memorable L.A. Shows This Year*
- Alice Bag's album release show at the Echo
 - Pete Anderson's second set of his show, followed by LoveyDove's set as part of the Messaround, at Viva Cantina
 - C.W. Stoneking at the Echo
 - Kid Congo And The Pink Monkey Birds at Permanent Records in Highland Park
 - La Victoria and La Tuya at Razorcake's quinceañera (those were the only two sets I saw)

Juan Espinosa

- Janitor Scum LP, tie with Kriegshöh LP
- Uranium Club: *Beat Session Vol. 1* CS and *Who Made the Man?* 7"
- Razorcake Cakeceañera with Desidia and La Tuya featuring La Victoria
- Napalm Death / Melt-Banana, Split 7"
- Vin Scully for sixty-seven years of Dodgers baseball announcing

Kayla Greet

1. Shit Present, Self-titled
2. Descendents and Bully at The Neptune, Seattle
3. Razorcake benefit show with Dead Bars, Listen Lady, Ramona, Sharkie, Burn Burn Burn, Brave Hands, Perfect People, and Young Go Hards at Black Lodge and Victory Lounge, Seattle
4. toyGuitar and CJ Ramone at The Funhouse, Seattle
5. Crusades, *This Is a Sickness and Sickness Will End*

Kevin Dunn

1. Wreck of the Zephyr, *After the Myths of Youth*
2. *The Spitboy Rule*, Michelle Cruz Gonzales
3. The Pretty Flowers / Last Good Sleep, Split 7"
4. *Brooklyn #94* (zine)
5. Rats From A Sinking Ship, *The Peasants Revolt* CD

Kiyoshi Nakazawa

1. Bundles / DWatS, Split 12". Thanks Keith Rosson for the recommendation.
2. Unlovables / Dirt Bike Annie, *Reunion Show* split LP
3. Hiccup, *Cassingle*

4. Post-It Show 12 art show at GR2
5. Bonnie Raitt, "I Can't Make You Love Me." I never heard it before but somebody posted it on my Facebook wall, so...

Kurt Morris

1. Super Unison, *Hero*
2. Planes Mistaken For Stars, *Prey*
3. System Of A Down, *Hypnotize*
4. Benton Falls, *Guilt Beats Hate*
5. Drunken Sufis, *Pala Pala*

Mark Twistworthy

- The Proletariat, *Soma Holiday* LP re-issue and live
- Brix & The Extricated, *Something to Lose* 7"
- Poizon, upcoming LP
- Heater, Self-titled 7"
- Sauna Youth, everything

Michael T. Fournier

- Shellac, MiniBeast at Met Cafe, Pawtucket, RI 10/21/16
- Proletariat, Ancient Filth, Pragmatics at Once Gallery, Somerville, MA 11/04/16
- Rules at Ralph's Diner, Worcester, MA 11/11/16
- Anal Trump, *That Makes Me Smart!* EP
- Fake Limbs, *Matronly* LP

Mike Dumps

- Top 5 Bands/Artists that Ruled 2016 for Me*
1. The Cure
 2. Samiam
 3. Joey Bada\$\$
 4. Dark Thoughts
 5. Laika's Orbit

Mike Frame

1. Drive By Truckers, *American Band* LP
2. Testament, *Brotherhood of the Snake* CD
3. Blackberry Smoke, *Like an Arrow* CD
4. Airbourne, *Breakin' Outta Hell* CD
5. Ramones, Self-titled 40th Anniversary CD

■ Naked Rob

Radio Valencia 87.9FM | SF

1. Heat, Self-titled 7"
2. The Blind Shake, *Celebrate Your Worth* LP
3. Drakulas, *Raw Wave* LP
4. The Monsters, *M* LP
5. Personal And The Pizzas, Self-titled LP

Nardwuar the Human Serviette

1. *Fluke Fanzine* #13—where else can you learn about Arkansas bands from the '90s! And *Fluke* is twenty-five years strong!
2. The Moderns, *The Year of Today* EP—re-issue of amazing Swedish mod circa 1979!

3. Strange Things—*Higher Anxiety* / *Gather Believers*, Vancouver, BC rock'n'roll greatness!
4. The Tubuloids—*It's Getting Weird* LP, uh, Vancouver, BC, tsunami surf rock!
5. *Ugly Things Magazine* #42—thirty-three years of the best unheard stories!

Nicole ■

- Top 5 Releases of 2016*
1. Sheer Mag, *III* EP
 2. Super Unison, *Auto*
 3. G.L.O.S.S., *Trans Day of Revenge* EP
 4. Bleached, *Welcome the Worms*
 5. Beach Slang, *A Loud Bash of Teenage Feelings*

Nighthawk

- Basement Benders at Fest
- Tenement at Fest
- Dan Vapid, *All Wound Up* CD
- The Mr. T Experience, Nobodys, Rev. Nørb And The Onions, at the Lyric Room, Green Bay
- Packers beating the Seahawks at Lambeau Field

Paul Silver

1. Yeesh, Little Big Bangs, Drool, Bow And Spear, at DC Torium, Chicago
2. Dead To Me record release show, with Western Settings, Dimber, Love Nothing at The Hi Hat, L.A.
3. Great Apes, *California Heart* LP
4. Cruz Radical record release show, with DFMK, GRIDS at the Whistle Stop, San Diego
5. Dead To Me, *I Wanna Die in Los Angeles* EP

Rich Cocksedge

- CRIM, *Blau Sang, Vermell Cel* LP
- The Damned, live at University of Plymouth, 12/03/16
- Wonk Unit and Jon Shoe, live at Exeter Cavern, 11/10/16
- Folk Devils, *Beautiful Monsters* (Singles and Demo Recordings 1984-1986) LP
- The Hippas, *I Just Want to Float in the Void* CS

Ryan Nichols

1. Cass McCombs *Mangy Love*
2. *Gimme Danger* (Stooges documentary)
3. *Narcocorrido* by Elijah Wald
4. *Einstein's Dreams* by Alan Lightman
5. Duchess Says, *Sciences Nouvelles*

Sal Lucci

- Cowboys, Self-titled LP
- Lumpy And The Dumpers, *Huff My Sack* LP

- Nots, "Cold Line" b/w "TV OD" 7"
- Buck Biloxi And The Fucks, "Obama Is a Cyborg" b/w "Digging through Trash" 7"
- LSDogs, "Creeps" b/w "You're Done" 7"

Sean Arenas

- Izzy True, *Nope* LP
- Sammus, *Pieces in Space* CD
- P.S. Eliot, *2007-2011* CD
- Desidia, *Harto*
- The Blind Shake, *Celebrate Your Worth* LP

Sean Koeppenick

- Super Stoked for New Records Coming in 2017*
1. T.S.O.L.
 2. The Damned
 3. The Dopamines
 4. Bash & Pop
 5. The Fags

Theresa W.

1. Deadaires' "Constance Demario"
2. Water protectors at Standing Rock
3. Plain glazed vegan donuts
4. Pandemic Legacy board game
5. "Out of office" email settings

Tim Brooks

- Noi!se, *Real Enemy* LP
- Ripcord, live in Leeds
- B squadron, *Saturday's Soldiers* EP
- Alienation, *Mini* LP
- Fatigue, *Scab* EP

Toby Tober

- Top Five Movies I Have Recently Enjoyed*
1. *Kubo and the Two Strings*
 2. *Hell or High Water*
 3. *Gimme Danger*
 4. *The Handmaiden*
 5. *Beaver Trilogy Part IV*

Todd Taylor

- Alice Bag, Self-titled LP and live at Self-Help Graphics' forty-third annual Dia de los Muertos
- Sex Stains, Self-titled LP
- Generacion Suicida, *Sombras* LP
- Bad Sports, *Living with Secrets* 12" EP
- El Banda, *Wściekły szpaler* EP

Ty Stranglehold

- Top 5 of 2016*
1. Toys That Kill, *Sentimental Ward*
 2. Mind Spiders, *Prosthesis*
 3. Drakulas, *Raw Wave*
 4. Bad Future, Self-titled
 5. Descendents, *Hypercaffium Spazzinate*



647(F): *Destroy All Monsters: 7"*

I remember these cats from waaaaay the fuck back, their old EP being a hoot, and homie Sean Antillon is rockin' the geetar, so I figured it'd be cool to catch up with what they're doing these days. One tune here—one side English, the other Japanese—which is an ode to the kaiju heroes of every cool kid's childhood. The tempo here is much slower than their tunes of yore, but the song is a strong one and they milk it for everything it's worth. Good stuff. Here's hoping there's more soon to follow. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sownsbbox)

ALPHA HOPPER:

Last Chance Power Drive: LP

I once saw Alpha Hopper live in the living room of an apartment towards the end of summer. I remember a bunch of dudes playing weird psych and Irene from Hot Tip in the middle of the room jumping up and down and spinning and yelling for probably twenty minutes straight. *Last Chance Power Drive* is so intense I thought about turning it off but then I didn't, and then I thought, "This is like if Priests weren't a surf band and became an out-of-control, heavy spaz thing." Or like, I don't know, Lydia Lunch telling Queens Of The Stone Age what to do. The title's Springsteen reference is misleading, though, in a way, Alpha Hopper are in the tradition of American song commentary/reportage. It's just they're also aliens, possibly. —Matt Werts (One Percent Press, onepercentpress.com / Radical Empathy)

ATTIC TED: *Paradise Dust Mischief: LP*

Dunno what the fuck they put in the water in Texas, but I can't think of a place that's added more to the odder fringes of punk's twisted heart. This is keeping well within that tradition—eschewing almost entirely any of the usual stereotypical "punk" trappings—instead reveling in klezmer, lysergic country, circus music, and a bevy of other kitschy influences that bent and fucked up in all the right ways. A nice ride that steps off the beaten path and finds many fun ponds in which to dip its toes. —Jimmy Alvarado (Pecan Crazy)

BAD SLEEP: *Self-titled: CS*

Completely dope pop punk out of Olympia. Everyone's idea of dope pop punk is different, but my idea is right and "Subtracting" and "Don't Care" and the rest of the songs on this tape are hits. This is a gold record tape. Sugary lo-fi songs and clean, clear lyrics on pink paper and slightly off-key vocals and, basically, this is the real deal. —Matt Werts (Mate Date / Reflective)

BARRY KNOEDL:

"Baby Don't Give Up" b/w "I Just Want to Make You Happy": 7" single

This is a reissue of Barry Knoedl's 1977 power pop single. It was originally the second release from Jim Antonucci's Death Records label, best known for releasing Jimi LaLumia &

RECORD REVIEWS



As a public defender, M.D.C. serves as the soundtrack for my occupation.

—Art Ertinger

the Psychotic Frogs' "Death to Disco (Disco Sucks)" and Cracked Actor's "Nazi School." Knoedl's songs, however, are pure sugary power pop performed by two self-described hardcore Beatles fans, Knoedl and his collaborator Jim Kern. It certainly shows! I'm glad that it's uncool to like the Beatles, but there's a reason this single is considered a classic of the genre. It's a little precious, and I like it. —Lyle (Frodus, frodusrecords.com)

B.D.: *Demo 2016: CD*

Fuzzed-out hardcore madness. B.D. (short for Bad Daddies) bring the goods. I could picture them sharing a bill with Portland's Macho Boys and Denver's The Nervous. If this is the demo, I can't wait to hear the fully realized recordings. My ears are open! —Ty Stranglehold (B.D., Self-released)

BIB: *Pop: 7" EP*

Lysergic hardcore? Groinoids with more groove in their giddy-up? The songs here are largely delivered in a steady stream, bounding about back and forth from one gear to the next—Flipper-esque dirge to mid-tempo stomp to driving gallop—often in the course of one tune... or it at least seems like that 'cause this train stops for nothing until it reaches the end of the vinyl groove. Add effects-drenched vocals, feedback crammed into every empty space, and a punchy delivery and we have ourselves a party, y'all. Thumbs up. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

BIG EYES: *Stake My Claim: CD*

Big Eyes has drifted away from Cheeky's scrappy pop punk (*Choke on a Cheeseburger* still gives me fuzzy feelings, though) and

evolved into a full-fledged hard rock band. *Stake My Claim* opens with a riff that requires a power stance to perform, then shifts gears with pop gem "Behind Your Eyes." The opening two songs embody singer/guitarist Kait Eldridge's songwriting: one part '70s and '80s hard rock, with thick Gibson SG power chords, and another part sugary pop rock punctuated by epic choruses. The album is populated with chuggy mid-tempo bangers that evoke Tom Petty, Joan Jett, and Cheap Trick, which is not exactly my cup of tea. Although I admire (and envy) the airtight execution, I miss the unpredictability of Big Eyes' first full length, *Hard Life*. —Sean Arenas (Don Giovanni, dongiovannirecords.com)

BLACK WIDOWS, THE: *Evolution: CD*

Tony Fate and his masked band of cohorts dish up another helping of e-vile instrumental rock. There's the obligatory hint of surf, but the band leans more towards an aggressive "rock" angle, with a bit more punk under the chassis than one might expect. They also have the sense to vary their attack to keep the suckage meter at zero. —Jimmy Alvarado (Black Widows, theblackwidows.net)

BLIND SHAKE, THE:

Celebrate Your Worth: CD/LP

It's been a few years since I reviewed The Blind Shake and even though the line-up has remained steady I feel the band's sound has progressed tremendously. I read a past review I wrote of them and found they sounded akin to an act that should've been on Amphetamine Reptile Records back in the 1990s. Now they have much more in common with some of the dirty, driving punk labelmates

on Goner Records. "Corpse on a Roof" especially shows this with its aggressive, hypnotic guitar riff and energetic tempo. The last four songs on the album are especially strong. They've got a brawny pace and drew me in a great deal. I found myself tapping my foot and bobbing my head a lot with *Celebrate Your Worth*. The first part of the album reminded me more of Toys That Kill. I'm digging it. —Kurt Morris (Goner)

BORN [REDACTED] *Death from Above: 10"*

Latest release from these veteran New York rock'n'rollers. With the infamous Candy Snatchers' Larry May on vocals, you know you're in for a wild ride! Age hasn't slowed these guys down; they deliver a balls-out, blazing set of tunes that—according to credible sources—fucking rips live, showing the young bucks how it's really done. Gearhead and Reptilian Records fans: get on this one. —Chad Williams (Hound Gawd!)

BRIX AND THE EXTRICATED:

"Something to Lose": 7"/CD

For the curious, Brix is actually Brix Smith Start, formerly of The Fall and who was once married to that band's mercurial frontman Mark E. Smith. This single is her new band's first release following a period of plying its trade at venues up and down the U.K. "Something to Lose" is a great song with bluesy riff-laden verses and a poppy chorus; a perfect amalgam to set down a marker for the band. "Faced with Time" has a consistent post-punk feel to it and ensures a touch of variety between the two songs. The CD release contains a bonus track, a live version of The Fall's "US 80's 90's" and it's a damn fine effort too, as one would expect from an outfit containing three former members of that band. —Rich Cocksedge (Blang)

BUNDLES / DAN WEBB

AND THE SPIDERS: Split: LP

DWATS should be huge, man. They're prolific, catchy, smart. Their side of the split is a solid rock framework that reminds me a bit of the stuff Nato Coles is doing—a handful of buoyant, confident garage songs on display here. But the real jaw-dropper of this split is Bundles, who come out of left field and just level the room. They play fierce and spirited punk with incredible lyrics, heart-rent vocals, and revved-up choruses that just floored me. The over-the-top emotions of Off With Their Heads, the serrated edges of Shinobu's "Trepanning," and New Junk City's hybrid of punk/Americana are merged together and then spread out over four incredible songs. Winner of this review batch for the illustrious "Band I'm Freaking out Over" award. This one's heartily recommended, and another high five to Shawn Higgins for some great album art. —Keith Rosson (Gunner USA)

CARONDELET GUY: *Howl Talk: 7"*

This is what appears to be the very first release for Carondelet Guy, a singer/

songwriter from Carondelet, Miss., taking a page from Tim Barry's book and injecting his own personality and stories into his raw, acoustic songs. Like the title says, this is very real stuff, immediately more authentic and engaging than most acoustic singer/songwriter stuff out there with origins in the punk rock community. No bullshit Springsteen-worship here or cliché lyrics about the back roads or back alleys that you know those guys never fucking walked down (the aforementioned Tim Barry certainly excepted). My only minor complaint is that the melodies on this record are quite repetitive, often using the exact same melody for every line of every verse of a song. With some work on variation and possibly taking these localized stories and relating them to a broader audience, Carondelet Guy should be the next singer the Revival Tour brings along. —Chad Williams (Do What?)

DO WHAT? Cairo Scholars: 7"

All the world's a garage, and all the men and women merely players in a million garage bands... or so it often feels, as the loosely defined genre continues to dominate the musical landscape. Different groups may integrate surf sounds, dabble in shoegaze, or go full '70s throwback, but the current glut of garage rock often leaves me scrambling to find synonyms for "lo-fi," "fuzz," and, well, "garage"—the internet recommends "car shed." Luckily, Grand Rapids

four-piece, Choke Chains, sound less like a band intentionally adopting a lo-fi, fuzzed-out, garage aesthetic and more like a band who just feel most at home playing between your mom's 1984 Chrysler LeBaron and a giant stack of paint cans. The A side of this translucent orange 7" single, "Cairo Scholars," is dark and weird and raucous and catchy, at once evoking punk, goth, psych, noise, and, yeah, garage. The bass is menacing, the drums are tight, the guitar hangs back only to descend into churning chaos during the track's denouement, and the vocals chomp and tear while sustaining a too-cool-for-this-shit attitude. Side B houses a toothy, grimy cover of The Deviants' "Billy the Monster" that preserves the original's creepy atmosphere, while carefully excising its more circus-y inclinations. Choke Chains' reverence for their forebears—namely the Stooges—is clear, but communicated through their swagger, not cheap mimicry. —Kelley O'Death (Hound Gawd!)

CHUNG ANTIQUE "Artesian Swell" b/w "Norse Code": 7"

Chung Antique are the kind of band who make me wish I was a better reviewer and a better musician. To act as though I have enough knowhow to properly pontificate about the kind of spacey, aquatic, mathy post-rock the instrumental trio from Seattle conjure would be a lie. What I can tell you is that even this troglodyte found a lot to like amongst their many time changes

and—I imagine—many pedals. Chung Antique lack the self-seriousness and cold technicality characteristic of many of their ilk, managing to infuse a surprising amount of soul into the music of "Artesian Swell" and "Norse Code" and a refreshingly cheeky humor into their titles. These songs are not exercises in boring mechanical wankery, but aural stories told through groove and melody intercut by crushing interludes of measured post-rock thrashing—like Fantômas barged in on Explosions In The Sky in the bathroom. Better yet, Chung Antique's reverberating dips and thunderous swells are interred in the grooves of stunning Coke bottle clear vinyl and enveloped by gorgeously austere album art. Aesthetically, this single is the whole package. —Kelley O'Death (Electricity & Lust)

CIRCUITS: Self-titled: CS

Psych power pop candy. Super catchy "Favorite Eyes" is a real earworm and sets the tone. Self-proclaimed, "Like a new wave Eddie Haskell fronting a Hanna-Barbera punk band," and I honestly don't think I could have come up with something as clever, so I'll stick with it. Their sound is modern power pop—with psych to soften the edges: bright, sunny guitar, and an unmistakable '60s garage kick. They walk a fine line between Shark Toys (their more melodic, less grungy tunes, and really almost anything on the Mt.St.Mtn. label), '70s Irish power pop band The Moondogs,

and The Nerves. But you can decide for yourself. My faves on here are "Favorite Eyes" and "Midnite Movie." Catch these newbies in the Bay. And buy this tape. —Camille Reynolds (Self-released)

LOVE MEAT: Jimmy's Lipstick: 7" EP

Angry, primal punk from Perth, Australia. Lotsa feedback and non-template skronk mongering that recalls the days when bands strived for a sound of their own, and made a point with a bit of bite and wit. Diggin' this lots. —Jimmy Alvarado (Static Shock, facebook.com/staticshockrecords)

DIRTAP TV: Self-titled: 7" EP

Precision-driving punk that is very much along the lines of the Dirtmap stable of bands. Instrumentation is lockstep with the rhythm with nice bits of poppy flourishes countering the occasional minor chord. Fans of Sonic Avenues and such would find much here to get their shimmy shakin'. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

CONDEMNED: Self-titled: CS

Condemned features current and former members of Chem-Trails and Oiltanker. Opton, Shane, and Tim from Oiltanker have been writing and playing music together for the better part of a decade, before you even hit play on this five-song cassette I knew to prepare my ears for the pummeling they were about to receive. From the opening track "This Is War," Condemned deliver a sonic beating of

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riffs and howling leads backed by ■ thundering low end. It's ■■ furious on tape as it is live. Vocal duties are shared by everyone in the band except the drummer Tim, and the three belt gut-shredding political lyrics you'll be stoked to scream along and circle pit to during the choruses. A lot of good d-beat came out in the last year, but Condemned is easily one of the best. —Paul J. Comeau (Vex, vex.rex@hotmail.com)

COUTEAU LITEX Hostile Environment: 7"

I freely admit it: I'm a sucker for good synth-wave/punk stuff, the odder-yet-rockin' the better. This is some choice listening in that vein—blown-out sound, aggressive but catchy, woozy synth, robotic drumming, and insistent bass lines augmenting vocals delivered in French. They keep the helping frustratingly spare—only two songs—but hopefully this portends more to come. —Jimmy Alvarado (Goner)

COWBOYS: Self-titled: LP

Ah, it warms my heart to know a band from Bloomington, Indiana is hot (says the Internet). I lived in Bloomington for many years and I'll always have good memories of the great Midwestern bands I saw and played shows with. My Midwest years taught me that people cared about playing and supporting music (stuff it, East and West Coasts). By the time I left Bloomington in 2015, The Cowboys were making waves locally, but I thought they'd

disappear like so many other good bands that suddenly vanish back into the nowhere from whence they came. I only saw them twice, because they would do stupid things like play house shows on ■ Tuesday night, and I would do stupid things like have to get up early Wednesday morning to go to work. Fortunately, The Cowboys have picked it up, touring and putting out this here album on the hot label Lumpy Records (one look at the cover and you can tell it's a Lumpy release). I've read some reviews of The Cowboys, and more than one called them garage punk. I have to disagree, even though "Thumbs" is ■ total rocker. From the first I heard them, I thought Cowboys had more of an early '80s California feel. (They have a Dead Kennedys-esque guitar tone I haven't heard from any other band of youngsters, and check out the Jello-like vibrato on "I Spy" or "Come All Ye Faithful.") The cover is a nice, heavy stock with ■ screened cover. All the songs are good, so it's hard to pick ■ favorite. "She Wants to Be French" teases "My Sharona" but gets wiggy near the end. "Clown Car" plays with reverb and feedback to excellent squiggly results. Midwestern punk gives me hope for music today. —Sal Lucci (Lumpy, spottedrace.bigcartel.com)

COWTOWN: Paranormal Romance: LP

The drums on this album come out swinging and are completely relentless for twelve raucous tracks. While this band emulates the sound

of The Dickies more than anything else to me, I'm willing to admit that it's the vocals that take me furthest to that comparison. On paper, they're nothing like the goofy, prop-wielding goofballs, though elements of Leonard Grave Phillips (with ■ occasional vibrato veering towards Marissa Paternoster of Screaming Females) come careening through. Production-wise, this record is slick and crisp, like the first bite of a polished, waxy apple. It's non-stop rock'n'roll that is incredibly dancey. Cowtown's guitar melodies are infectious, but it's the fast, hard, near-panic-inducing drumming that grabs me the most. I don't know when their percussionist gets a chance to come up for air. The beats have a constant double tap on the snare that is mind boggling and they somehow feels faster than d-beat. I'd compare them to Nomeansno, but only in the sense that they're frantic, unconventional, and hard to pin down at times. "Let Go" hits on a new wave tinge—especially with the added keyboard hooks—that lands somewhere around Adam Ant and Devo. The lyrics are simple and easy to sing along to, while not being vapid or devoid of any reliability. This is ■ cacophony of tunes from the U.K. that'd easily kick off any party. —Kayla Greet (HHBTM, hbbtm.com)

CRUNKY NIDS: Don't Give the Kids New What They Don't Want: 3" CD-R

It has been a few years since I have heard anything from this band outta Cleveland. Features Wedge of 9

Shocks Terror and Gordon Solie Motherfuckers and this is right in line with that stuff. There are nine songs on ■ small three-inch CD-R. They go by pretty quick. At this point, I have a hard time thinking that anyone has not made up their mind about the noisy and vicious and great HC that comes out of the collected Cleveland crew. This is as good as anything else, ■■ if you are into H100S or Darvocets and the like, this will likely grab ya. —Mike Frame (Hibachi)

DAMNIT JIMS, THE: Just Punk Enough: CD

The Damnit Jims play really solid pop punk with a few toes creeping over the hardcore border. Vocals are delivered aggressively, but with occasional moments of delicious awkwardness that take just the right amount of edge off of the aggression. And the guitars sound like chainsaws eating ■ sofa—nice! Lyrically, the fruit does not fall far from the tree, either: songs about everyday life from the perspective of an aging outsider. Good stuff all around, and one of my new favorites. I had to gush over the Damnit Jims and use them as ■ example in my grammar class today, which means that I like the record ■ whole fucking bunch. (Grammatical diagrams of this review available upon request.) —The Lord Kveldulfr (Squid Hat)

DANNY & THE CHALETANS: Bug Out: CD

It's refreshing to listen to ■ lean, mean, no-frills rock'n'roll. Danny

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& The Darleins boasts Dan Kroha of The Gories, but this trio, with Colleen Burke on bass and Richie Wohlfeil on drums, isn't as feral as the legendary Motor City outfit. They're tight, precise, and possess more swagger than ten bands with skinny ties and shades. Of the twelve songs, a handful are covers—The Who's "Leavin' Here," The Keggs' "Girl," and The Nightcrawlers' "Little Black Egg" are present—but *Bug Out* never feels jumbled. It's a palate cleansing listening experience; a remedy for overproduced butt rock posing as rock'n'roll. This is the real deal, folks. —Sean Arenas (In The Red)

DARK BLUE:

Red, White, and Dark Blue: LP

Philly represent: members of Paint It Black, Bomb Builder, and the Loved Ones sounding nothing like any of those bands. We're treated to some ingenious '80s Brit pop, goth, and shoegaze worship by way of Bauhaus, Jesus And Mary Chain, and My Bloody Valentine. Sometimes dreary, mostly mid-paced, but always interesting: the drums command much attention as the intricate and mesmerizing strumming/noisy guitar parts. The vocals that of a subdued but still powerful Nick Cave howling away his miseries. Oddly enough, this might appeal to fans of Cold Cave but, for my tastes, this is what I personally hoped a band like Cold Cave actually sounded like. A singles collection LP for those keeping score, but could

have just as much worked out as full length. Trust and buy. —Juan Espinosa (Adagio 830, adagio830.de)

DD OWENS: Self-titled: LP

Nice! Nods to Giorgio Murderer. "I'm an Animal" and "Gimme Head" are reminiscent of a slightly sped-up Life Stinks almost to perfection. The simplistic pulse and drone of drum and bass provide the backdrop for thick, angular guitar riffs. Vocals are unmistakably the dude from Sick Thoughts. Weird and highly distorted. —Camylle Reynolds (12XU)

DEAD MEADOW: Howl: CD

This is probably a cheap shot journalistically, but I want to take advantage of the opportunity of Burger reissuing Dead Meadow's second album *Howl* to mention a band playing extraordinary, magma-laced stoner rock since '98 that never seems to get anywhere. John Peel asked them to record for his show based on their first album. Matador signed them (which might have been part of the problem). They had tour support. And they're still going. Regular touring. New album. I know what you're thinking: you think this band sucks and I'm just doing that old man thing where I wax poetic about a group that's been around forever. But I'm really not. I'm actually part of the problem. I forget about them from time to time. I had the pleasure of reviewing their live show for *The Tucson Weekly* a few years ago and the first thought I had was: "That

band is still playing?!" I don't have to tell you nobody was there. I've seen them in D.C., the band's hometown, and no one has been there except those people who always go to shows. Since '98 they have mostly only attracted the attention of those people who always go to shows. And John Peel. This band has been solid since their first record, producing several albums of mountain range sound waves made up of highs of stoner fury and lows of thoughtful fuzz psych. *Howl* is an album, not just a collection of songs. And you now get it for your tape player for six fucking dollars! I'm sure the sales from their cassette reissues will buy them a nice meal. If you're into heavy psych or stoner rock, just take the leap on this one. —Billups Allen (Burger)

DECRANEO: Sacrillegio: CD

I've been into Decranco since their last self-titled LP release. They have a Jerry's Kids and '80s hardcore—a la Macho Boys tough girl—vibe. Even a tinge of Neighborhood Brats, and I love it. It cross-cuts between high-energy, melodic, almost dance punk into searing hardcore trash. Vocals are bright and fierce with Spanish lyrics. —Camylle Reynolds (Malditos Vinilos / Muerte A Tipo / Old Kids Brigade / Campary / No Glory / 1984 / Crapoulet)

DEPROGRAM: Demonstration Tape: CD

This brutal, instantly engaging demo is on the interesting cassette label Einsamkeit Tapes, a small Canadian

company putting out neat-looking tapes left and right. Deprogram is from Olympia and they play d-beat-inspired hardcore in the hardest sense of the term. For anyone into Anti Cimex or other d-beat progenitors, Deprogram has that now-classic sound, but with contemporary political lyrics. I like the tape's title, too. When was the last time you thought of the fact that the word demo is short for demonstration? —Art Ettinger (Einsamkeit, einsamkeit.tapes.blogspot.com)

DIE GROUP: Self-titled: EP

I caught Die Group at 2 AM at Gonerfest13 after party with about two hundred other people, packed like sweaty drunk sardines in a dive bar. Needless to say, it was pretty fucking glorious. These L.A. punks offer up four slammers, and it's a hot mess mix between Giorgio Murderer and Devo ala "Mongoloid," served up with just enough scum and grit to give their minimalistic garage punk sound some real teeth. Legit. —Camylle Reynolds (Sex Tape)

DIRTY KILLS: Dead End Shithole: 7"

The New Brunswick three-piece, Dirty Kills, are the definition of no-frills, evoking the relative haplessness and raw charm of a high school punk band formed as a catharsis for small town ennui. While some of the catchier chord progressions on *Dead End Shithole* tease a sense of optimism or hope, those musical sunbeams are quickly negated by lyrics about



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being broke, drunk, and directionless in a literal and figurative rut. All four tracks visit and revisit themes of wanting to escape while languishing in resignation. The apparently stream-of-consciousness lyrics are prosaic, often forgoing rhyme schemes completely as though the crushing weight of Dirty Kills' desperate reality has left them too jaded and exhausted for poetry. However, words that may seem clumsy on the page become perfectly elegiac when paired with the band's loose, honest, barely-keeping-this-van-on-the-road playing style. *Dead End Shithole* is above all authentic and will surely resonate with punks who have spent time—or who are currently serving time—in shitty nowhere towns. But for those who have gotten out and left it all behind, this stroll down memory alleyway may be a bit too real for comfort. —Kelley O'Death (Tour Van)

DISORDER / AGATHOCLES Live 2014: LP

The once-mighty Disorder, birthers of noise punk, sounding rather unmighty and bloated (beer burps into the mics in between songs, ugh) on a live sound board recording from a 2014 show in Holland. The songs are there but the chaos and enthusiasm is sorely lacking, making for an unremarkable listen. I can just imagine myself wide eyed and happy at the start of their set only to be left wishing that each song after the third or fourth was their last. Agathocles:

yes, they've done a split with nearly every fucking extreme band. Yes, this is a live recording but don't roll your eyes just yet, mate. This is some top notch fucking grind-influenced crust punk or "mincore" if you will. Tight, loud, noisy, and brutal; everything you imagined and hoped a classic band would be like in a live setting. Agathocles literally have a thousand records to choose from, but this is definitely a good start if you've yet to listen to the Belgian mincemasters. —Juan Espinosa (Power It Up, power-it-up.de)

DÖDSVARG: NEW CD

Pretty fucking brutal. This Swedish metal project seems to be a primarily solo production that features an assortment of guest vocalists and collaborators. That makes for a healthy variety of heavy-as-fuck music, from dirge-like doom and black metal shrieking to soaring, symphonic leads and breakneck crusty hardcore. Pretty impressive considering that, more often than not, the songs blend fluidly from one to the next. Some similarly genre-bending instrumental breaks are scattered throughout (the mellow, gothic-country-leaning "Ivan" has to be the coolest). Lyrics are in Swedish, German, and English—maybe more than that, but that's all I've translated. Definitely dark, heavy, and pissed, language aside. Metal is admittedly not my native territory, but this is tight. —Indiana Laub (Self-released)

DON'T: Fever Dreams: LP

Behind the drum kit for Portland, Ore.'s Don't is Sam Henry of the legendary Wipers. His style accompanies hard-driving guitar and bass riffs that make noise like a classic '80s West Coast surf punk band, with a voice from Jenny Don't that—for me—is good enough for pop rock, but not hard enough for punk. —Jon Mule (Rockstar, rockstarrecords.de / Doomtowntown Sounds)

DOUBLE CROSS: Self-titled: CS

A non-stop hardcore onslaught from a Bay Area band so new they haven't even played their first show yet. Double Cross channel the best in early '80s American hardcore while giving it that old, familiar SF/Oakland boot to the face. The lyrics paint a dismal picture of our world's rapid decline and the mental toll it can take. As hardcore becomes more and more ironic (yo, your expensive running shoes are clean they didn't even leave a scuff on my face after you roundhouse kicked me standing next to the pit) it's reassuring to know that there are still bands screaming about the relatable, fucked-up shit that consumes my brain on my bus rides to work and back from the "nice" neighborhoods. —Juan Espinosa (Tankcrimes, tankcrimes.com)

DR. IDENTITY: Self-released: ■

This tape is well done. It's a bass-driven slow driver with a lot of tom-heavy drumming. The very downbeat

lyrics and singing style are recorded well and plays to the music perfectly. The whole thing moves at a similar pace, but not to its detriment. I like the drawing of carpentry (I think) tools on the cover well. It looks like what it is, unless I have it wrong. The tape is very Factory or 4AD-sounding to me, although I'm sure there must be a hipper, more recent reference to make. But if you're into that, I think you'd like this. —Billups Allen (dridentity.bandcamp.com)

DRAINS, THE: Demo: CS

This is a tape of dirty twangy earworms out of Buffalo, N.Y. Fuzzy-snotty vocals set off beachy, guitar-driven tracks about hating cops and being in love. It's sort of like if the Germs went country. It rules. —Lyle (Self-released, subject1.bandcamp.com)

DRAKULAS: NEW Wave: LP

Alright, Boppers, listen up. There's a new crew out there taking the streets by storm. These cats are telling it like it is out there: all gritty world of turf wars, deals gone wrong, weird sex and videotapes. That's right Boppers, Drakulas are laying down the *Raw Wave* like they invented it. Forget those sissies from Coney, Drakulas are bringing the real deal straight to your face. Songs so catchy you'd think they would be selling them in little vials on the corner. Dirtnap Records proves again that they know what's happening down in Texas and *Raw Wave* stands up with all the rest of the amazing

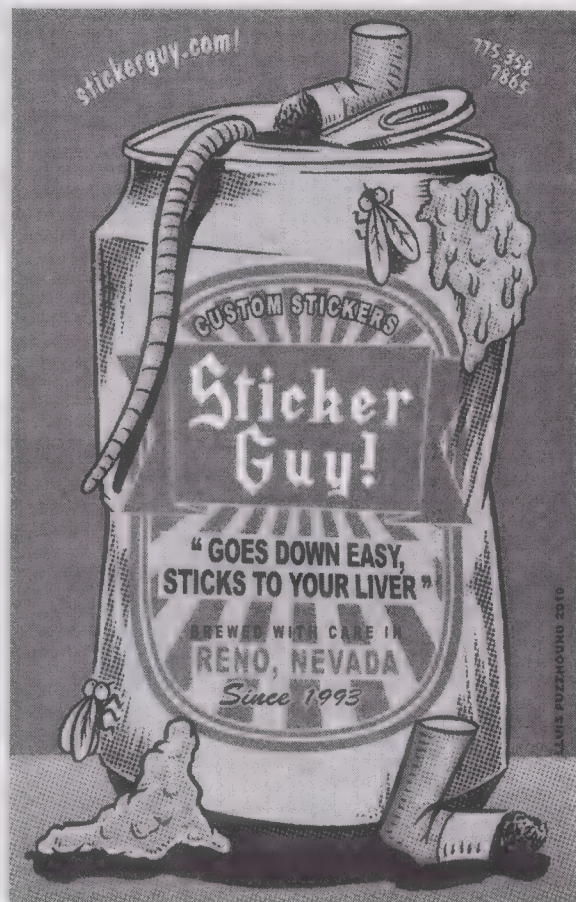
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DITCHES SAYS:

Sciences Mouv'n LP

This is a killer record. The sticker says, "A lethal dose of antagonistic rock from Montreal." That's a pretty accurate description, although I found it to be more awesome than antagonistic. There are echoes of '80s new wave influence here but with more of a punk grit. If you enjoy Pretty Girls Make Graves or The Vanishing, put your ears up to this record. -Ryan Nichols (Slovenly)

DU-RITES, THE:

J-Zone and Pablo Martin Are: LP

Half an hour of gritty, retro, home recorded, self-released, DIY funk instrumentals from this New York duo. Drummer J-Zone, an underground rap vet who is new to the kit, provides a rollicking, sample-worthy base of Meters-inspired New Orleans funk. Guitarist Pablo Martin is a versatile talent who helps the songs run the groove gamut from humid Booker T. & The MG's Memphis soul, to Mel Brown's chicken scratch boogaloo, with breaks for bits that sound lifted from spy and blaxploitation flicks. Backwards-looking soul often feels sanitized and lab-created, but the Du-Rites come through with a raw recording and a palpable sense of joy, blessing us with a record that is full of heart. Play it in the car and feel like

you're in a cool B movie from the '70s. -Chris Terry (jzone.bandcamp.com)

DEATH GILLS: Wanderlust: LP

Some interesting contradictions here—pop steeped in echoes of the '60s but with a revving engine under the hood that would wind up a pit quite nicely; sweet, almost dreamy vocals over rough 'n' tumble garage punk that easily could've been lifted off of some obscure Marked Men record. Muffs meet 10,000 Maniacs on a meth bender, maybe? All that matters is that it's awesome and I can't stop listening. -Jimmy Alvarado (Grave Mistake)

ELECTRIC PEACE:

Self-titled: CD + DVD

Electric Peace were an L.A.-based garage/psych/punk/rock band (mix 'n' match whichever way ye like and you'll be on the right path) who released a number of singles, EPs, and LPs 1982-'89. Collected here are a number of tracks culled from assorted releases that showcase what the band did best—plunder the best bits from punk, the Cramps, and the Paisley Underground and make it all rock. "Kill for Your Love" is still a devastating bit of garage-fuzz and it's in good company with much of the rest that's collected here. You also get a DVD with a very '80s looking video for the song "Big Man." Nice visiting with these cats again. -Jimmy Alvarado (Big K, BrianKilduff@sbcglobal.net)

ERGS!, THE:

Goddamn Death Dedication: 7"

And just like that everything seems normal and okay in this world. If just for a little bit. The Brothers Erg truly are the pinnacle of music nerdism meets technical proficiency, and they're not hiding anything on *Goddamn Death Dedication*. You may think you've outgrown ultra-poppo punk songs about sentimental weenie stuff, but you definitely have not when it comes to this band. Your Ergs collection is not complete if you haven't picked up this record. Far from a half-baked reunion record, this is a real as ever. New Jersey is alright if you like saxophones. -Daryl (Whoa Oh)

ERICA FREAS: Patient Ones: LP

In the effort of full disclosure: I would follow Erica into the most perilous of situations if she asked me to. I trust her. Keeping that in mind, listening to and appreciating her music feels like a miniscule act of dedication compared to what I'm ready to put on the line. With a resilient and comforting voice that's attached to an equally unwavering and determined conscience, these are epic examples of how the pain and fear in this world can be approached and presented in a way that makes it all a little better. This isn't just RVIVR unplugged; it's bare, it's bedrock, it's what you find in dreaming. It's a life lived by example and the sounds that transpire from such actions. Inspiring. -Daryl (Rumbletowne / Don Giovanni)

ESCAPADO, EL: Here's My Eternity: CD

Good, sloppy hardcore. Made me want to throw the chair through the window in delight. El Escapado kind of remind me of '80s New York hardcore crunching up against *Learn-era* Verbal Assault, but I could be way off on that. Rollicking songs about punk rock and drinking. My only fault is that at seven tunes the record is way too short. -The Lord Kveldulfr (Stik Man)

EX-CULT: Negative Growth: CD

Another helping of fuzzed-out 'n' fucked up punk, again produced by Ty Segall. Continuing along the same road they've previously traversed, the sound is dark, taut, and angry, augmented by a sound blown out just enough to make it abrasive yet still wholly listenable. Nice work. -Jimmy Alvarado (In The Red)

TAXI SURFERS: Cheap Man: LP

Gritty gutter punk outta Detroit that sounds like the missing link between Midwestern malcontents The Guns and Bay Area Vats-punks Fang. Two-piece groups are usually not my cup o' poison, but given the amount of sleazy racket they're churning out, I'm thinking the mere act of finding someone worthy and capable of delivering low end with the same amount of caustic fervor might only serve to detract from a band that clearly can take or leave said low end. -Jimmy Alvarado (X!)



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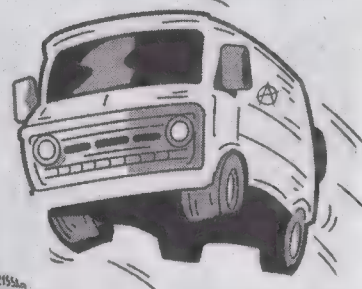
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FATHER'S DAY: That's It!**FATHER'S DAY: LP/CD**

There is a long-standing tradition in punk rock known as the "fuck" band—bands thrown together, often based on a certain theme or joke that plays for little more than shits 'n' giggles or to annoy the fuck out of many people as possible. Some become relatively well-known institutions—Me First And The Gimme Gimmes comes to mind—some come and go in the blink of an eye, and some are actually quite good. The central conceit of Arizona's Father's Day seems to be based on voicing the concerns, frustrations, and woes of the average suburban paternal figure... if he either existed pre-1989 or looked too eagerly to Ward Cleaver for guidance. The gamut of that type of parent's nightmares—gay sons, promiscuous daughters, a wife that doesn't know her place, failed vacations, and so on—are given a run-through set to largely hardcore trappings at varying tempos, with *That's It!* being the harder and faster of the two. While some of the stuff here might give the passing listener pause, those that get the joke will appreciate the effort put in here.

—Jimmy Alvarado (Related)

FATSO JETSON / DEL-TOROS: Split: 7"

The cool waters of Holland collide with the wavering heat of California's Palm Desert in this two-song instrumental split. Desert rock godfathers Fatso Jetson dominate the A side with "Dream Homes," an almost seven-

minute psych trip all the way out to Joshua Tree and back again, which was plucked from the CD release of their 2016 full-length, *Idle Hands*. A family affair these days—featuring legendary frontman Mario Lalli and his son Dino Von Lalli on guitars, as well as Mario's cousin Larry Lalli on bass—Fatso Jetson launch into their unique brand of stoner rock transfused with jazz, punk, and surf sensibilities at the top of the track. The guitars wail like coyotes in the darkness. As it progresses, the song's massive riff and steadfast groove begin to capsize, warp, and twist as though the drugs are taking hold. Toward the end, the improvisational psych guitar becomes ominous, dragging the listener deeper into the void before the clouds part and "Dream Homes" floats away on the wings of a ghostly organ. But the ride ain't over yet, as Dutch surfrockers del-Toros close behind with "Die Cast" on the split's B side. Undulating between *Casino Royale* samples—the 1954 made-for-TV iteration featuring everyone's favorite James Bond... Barry Nelson—ringing surf guitar, and classic rock devotion run through a stoner rock filter, the track ebbs and flows like the tide before reaching a frenetic crescendo in the middle third. "Die Cast" then settles back into its riff, concluding the story embedded in its samples and exemplifying the band's cinematic approach. Bond's adversary, Le Chiffre, may have gambled and lost, but both Fatso Jetson and del-Toros won big with this epic

release. —Kelley O'Death (Shattered Platter, shatteredplatter@gmail.com, shatteredplatter.com)

FLINTETTES, THE: Split: LP/CD

Elvis Costello meets Eddie Money on this three-track platter. These songs wouldn't be out of place on a soundtrack for a TV show on the CW. Not my bag per se, but I do have to note the awesome die-cut, heavy cardboard cover and the 180+ gram pressing. This record felt as if it contained two records. —Garrett Barnwell (La-Ti-Da, latidarecords.com)

FOLK DEVIL: Beautiful Monsters**(Singles and Demo Recordings****1984-1986): LP/CD**

Despite seeing Folk Devils numerous times in the '80s, most notably as support for the first U.K. show by Suicidal Tendencies, I never owned any of the band's records. This release, featuring eighteen remastered tracks, reminds me why I enjoyed seeing the band back then and has finally provided me with a recording to listen to. This blues-based punk rock frequently reminds me of The Three Johns, another band that lived through the Thatcher era, a time which provided many a target for bands to aim at. Both outfits had a rhythm section which could haphazardly weave its way through songs whilst a guitar sliced and chopped its way through proceedings. The majority of songs still sound contemporary, musically and lyrically, and given the current

political landscape in the U.K. it's quite sad to reflect that little has changed in thirty years. —Rich Cockedge (Optic Nerve, info@opticnerverecordings.com, opticnerverecordings.com)

FOUR BROTHERS:**Expect It: 7" single**

Chip Kinman from the Dils has a new band, and it's more on the rock'n'roll side of things than in the realm of country he explored after the dissolution of the Dils. The mood here is light, and more about having a good time, as evidenced in the song "Expect It," which sounds like something that would go over pretty well in the live setting. The main riff in "The Fall" is pretty similar to the Clash's "Should I Stay or Should I Go." These songs aren't terrible, but there's something lacking that I can't quite put my finger on, and this isn't really "my cup of tea." —Matt Average (Porterhouse, porterhouserecords.com)

FOUR BROTHERS: Death to False Posi: CD

This is a band named after a line from a seminal *Star Trek: The Next Generation* episode, "Chain of Command." In this episode Captain Picard is tortured by the Cardassians who offer to stop only if he admits to seeing five lights instead of the four that are actually there. It's an exercise in control over a captor and is an homage to the *T-4* test they do on Winston Smith in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. My point is that this is a band with strength and integrity. On paper, they're just another pop punk band



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to join in the ranks of melodic songs about girls. Move one layer past that and you'll find ■ group with smart, heartfelt lyrics, warm tones, and sweet harmonies. I mean this in the nicest way, but this is punk's version of easy listening. The title track hits on topics that are fairly uncommon in the pop punk world. Instead of glossing over bummery emotions or sugar coating the rough stuff of life, they put ■ spotlight on it. Among those honest lyrics there are couplets that contain ■ tinge of apathy and realness such as: "I don't wanna change the world / I'm just looking for ■ way to get the girl." On the flipside, you can look at that as a commentary on bands that push a manifesto for social change when, in all honesty, they just want to write love songs. On a side note, I was listening to a lot of Samiam recently and noticed ■ striking similarity in the vocal stylings of Jason Beebout and Four Lights' vocalist Dan Gardner. *Death to False Posi* is a nice diversion from your typical bands of guys with beards, while toeing the line close enough to fit in to that very same demographic. —Kayla Greet (Bomb Pop)

FRET RATTLES, *Pushed to the Metal and Damn the Consequences*: LP

The incipient danger with sitting down and listening to albums by bands that appear to have trundled along in the wake of the Supersuckers/Hellacopters/Gluecifer/*et al* is that they often tend to perpetually threaten to be sucked up into the fundamental aperture of

their own car club clichés, rendering listener interest functionally zero. And, while two of the three songs that really turned my head were actually covers to which I had not been previously hipped ("If This Is Love" by Charlie Pickett & The Eggs, and "Lonely for You Baby" by Sam Dees) (the third being "Shake My Brain," which just flat-out sounds like the Devil Dogs), overall, I thought this record more or less delivered the goods with ■ minimum of social embarrassment. This record is not apt to change nor save lives, but it's certainly decent enough for minor soul repair. **BEST SONG THAT ISN'T A COVER:** "Shake My Brain." **BEST SONG TITLE:** Also "Shake My Brain." **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** One of the guys in the band is wearing ■ Dragons T-shirt, and I once went to ■ strip club with them. —Rev. Nørb (Self-released)

FRUSTRATIONS:

***Transmission from the Ether*: LP**

These cats continue to revel in punk's arty outlands while managing to keep it all within ■ "rock" mindframe. They easily stew assorted styles—straight rock here, some strangled surf guitar there, ■ heap of Jesus Lizardesque skronk-rock for color, some roots for flavor, psychedelic post-punk for a bit of dark sophistication—into something that echoes so many others yet doesn't sound like another boring retreat. When they delve off into extended noise passages it sounds more inevitable than contrived, no

small feat. The soundtrack to your next bad acid trip. —Jimmy Alvarado (X!)

FUCK IT...I QUIT: *Damn 2016: 7*

Twelve pummeling tracks of hardcore punk from New Jersey. The muddy production only enhances how truly gnarly it all is. It's as though they propped up a Radioshack mic with ■ stack of '80s Thrashers and A.L.F. pamphlets and dubbed *Killed by the Kids* onto ■ warped tape. They blasted said tape from their backseat boombox as they drove around Asbury Park all summer, and when the glorious day came to record this demo: magic was made. —Daryl (Not Like You)

GAR GAR: *Self-titled*: LP

Cool, weird surf psych garage with the occasional rock'n'roll Cramps guitar riffs; just rough enough around the edges. Kinda like B-52's and Devo, and pretty much cherry picking all the good, weirdo punk stuff. "Mutant" is a perfect example, legit with off-kilter, shitty guitar. Even a smidgen of hardcore in "Skully Da Drummer." It's super good and super weird with the shittiest of shitty drums, which I'm partial too. And plenty of sparse, straight-laced man retro vocals. Oh, and Gar Gar is ■ one man band in an alligator mask? Silly. —Camylle Reynolds (Pleuracanthus)

GAR CHAMBER: *Advice from Yummy*: CS

Calling this tape "an exercise in futility" would be ■ insult to both futility and exercise. Why must this

exist? **BEST SONG TITLE:** "VIII." **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Cassette comes in a "silk screened slipcase," which is a folded-up piece of paper with something that looks like a magic marker scrawl on it. Well fuck, in *that* case, I'll take a dozen! —Rev. Nørb (Peterwalkee, peterwalkeerecords.com)

GENERACION SUICIDA: *Sombras*: LP

I'm seemingly at ■ loss for words. What is there left to say about South Central punk-as-fuck heroes Generacion Suicida except that I'm not surprised. I'm not surprised that they get tighter with each recording. I'm not surprised that they blow band after band off the stage when they're the opening act. I'm not surprised that they've completed several successful tours in Europe, Japan, Mexico, and Central/South America. I'm definitely not surprised that *Sombras* is every bit as powerful and catchy ■ their previous full length and singles. If you're a fan then you probably already own this. If you're new to the dance then prepare to meet your new favorite band. —Juan Espinosa (Going Underground)

GERBILS, THE: *Damn Detroit*: LP

One of my prized treasures from 1981 is a (probably non-functional now) cassette on which Barry Henssler of the Necros dubbed me demos of the cool Detroit/Toledo area bands who had yet to appear on vinyl—Negative Approach, the Meatmen, Violent Apathy, Bored Youth. I don't

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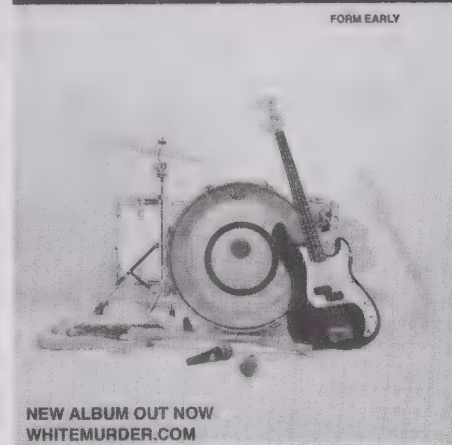
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remember ever hearing about the Gerbils, which is a shame because I probably would have liked them more than Violent Apathy (or Youth Patrol), though less than Negative Approach, the Meatmen, or Bored Youth. Since these recordings ("from the original master tapes!"—still kinda sounds like a cassette Barry would have dubbed me) were from mid-1982, I can only surmise that this Detroit four-piece missed the boat on getting on the *Process of Elimination* EP, and were lost thru the cracks after that (a review of their *GM Working Man* cassette in the third *MRR* notwithstanding). Anyway, this band generally keeps things at the rapid tempo which defined the era (the drummer sounds ■ bit like the dude from The Freeze), and adds an occasional Screamers-like synth on ■ few songs, to interesting effect on songs with decidedly un-synthy song titles like "I Don't Need No Friends" "Kill Everyone," "Now I Want to Die," and "What Don't I Hate?" I also wanna say the singer sounds ■ bit like Darby Crash, but maybe that's just because "Gerbils" comes right before "Germs" in the dictionary. In any event, if you put this collection up against all the other punk records released in calendar year 1982, you could conceivably wrangle ■ B-minus out of it, which ain't bad, all things considered. BEST SONG: "I Hate the Law." BEST SONG TITLE: "What Don't I Hate?" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Design

by Jason Willis! —Rev. Nørb (Lysergic Sound Distributors, ldsounds.com)

GET DEAD

Honesty Lives Elsewhere: CD

Twelve tracks of thinking man's drinking music, or drinking man's thinking music, whatever you prefer. If you were a fan of their last couple of releases, there is plenty to like here: gruff-as-fuck vocals, intelligent lyrics, and a little swing that often eludes other less capable bands. As per usual, the disc sounds sonically amazing and, I have to say, it's one of the better releases I've checked out lately from Fat. Recommended and tasty. —Garrett Barnwell (Fat, fatwreck.com)

GLEAM GARDEN: Self-titled: 10" EP

Highly melodic, energy-driven, and sunny. "Wasting Time" kicks things off super drenched in ■ Strokes vibe, same with "Stop the World," "Vision in White," and "Empty Night, Empty Cry." Honestly, they could be plucked straight off a Strokes LP. Also highly influenced by the Velvet Underground, these Japanese punk rock'n'rollers never miss a beat. In fact, they're perfectionists. There's even some '78 Elvis Costello in "Woo Woo" that they cross over into. Highly enjoyable, sweet 10". —Camille Reynolds (Snuffy Smiles)

GRAND UNDOING, THE: Sparks Rain Down from the Lights of Love: CD

This is one of those records with ■ title that is so lame you know that

the record must be friggin' great and ironically out of sync with the title, or it's just as bad if not worse than the title itself. This is the latter. Rehashed, clichéd, and over-emoted prog-rock-gone-lounge that bored me to death. Yuck. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Candy Rock)

GRANDPA DEATH EXPERIENCE: The Unforgiving Shoe of the Future: CD

GDE is the current project of Ron Goudie, a Canadian-born (though I'm not sure where) musician with roots playing and producing in the metal/punk scene since the '70s. Its seems ■ though he's making a comeback, almost akin to ■ rock equivalent to Nathaniel Mayer or R.L. Burnside. Living in the Netherlands, he's got himself ■ young group of lads to help him rock out his current formulation of southern twang meets stoner rock. Good stuff. Should be inspiring to us all. —Steve Adamyk (Saustex)

GREAT APES: California Heart: LP

When you can challenge your possible source material (Jawbreaker, Dead To Me) for time on the turntable, you know you're on to something good. You may have even produced ■ 2016 Top 10 album; post-nodules Schwarzenbachian vocals paired with Dead To Me leads and *24 Hour Revenge Therapy* hooks. It can suck to get compared to other bands, but when your record is this good, you shouldn't worry. Looking to get that tingle that starts in your toes and travels to your

throat? Warm up with *California Heart*. —Matt Seward (Asian Man)

HARRINGTON SAINTS / CONTROL: Piss Your Poison: 7"

I feel alienated by a lot of oi stuff I hear these days. Some of it seems so distant from punk, musically and thematically. Not the case with this split. Harrington Saints deliver raucous oi tunes, while Control go with ■ street punk vibe. This is like ■ mosh pit with a perfect balance of skinheads and mohawks. —MP Johnson (Pirates Press)

HARRY CLOUD: Red Barn: CD

Dermatillomania is ■■ obsessive disorder characterized by picking ■■ one's own skin. Google that shit and it will give you nightmares. It also happens to be the title of the first track on this album from Harry Cloud. Also, irony of ironies, it is what listening to this record on repeat, trying to figure out how to characterize it, makes me feel. I want to pick at my fucking skin. It doesn't make any sense to me. There are acoustic grunge tracks like the above mentioned, there are computer-generated loops, there are chipmunk voices, there are butt rock '70s guitar solos, and doomy metal riffs that seem to come from out of nowhere. If that sounds confusing to you, just think how I must feel. My skin itches. —Jon Mule (Self-released)

HEY LOVER: Sinking Ships: LP

Despite the fact that the guitar ■■ this record is cleaner than Paul

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McCartney's grandfather, the drummer only uses ■ cymbal on rare occasions, and the band is a co-ed three-piece who primarily sing chirpy little songs about infatuation, innocence, and death, the playing somehow manages to be REALLY TIGHT and the record somehow manages to be REALLY LOUD, which is not usually how such things go down. The production values, coupled with the full-color gatefold sleeve in which the album is housed, have got me scouring the content of this album for some manner of aesthetic heft I may have overlooked—some type of evidence that the content of the songs matches up with the packaging and production. It just kinda sounds like the world's loudest piece of cotton candy. Might that be your jam? **BEST SONG:** "Underground." **BEST SONG TITLE:** "AHHHAHHHH." **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Mixed by ■ real squire! *Death to false squires!* —Rev. Nørb (Hovercraft)

HICKOIDS: *Thin Out of Towners*: CD
This is a record of covers that the Hickoids recorded in the fall of 2014, and it serves as the coda for longtime guitarist Davy Jones, recently dead from cancer. On the record the band imposes their sound ■ the stylings of Willie Nelson, Dicks, Rich Minus, Roky Erickson, Terry Allen, and Doug Sahm. Having never been deeply versed in the stylings of the Hickoids, I turned to the internet and found that ■ their website varying descriptions

of their sound such as "psychedelic country" and "glambilly" are tossed around. Both are apt, and I liked the record; if you're into these guys I imagine you'll like it, too. Rest in great peace, Davy Jones. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Saustex)

HIPPAES, THE:

"I Just Want to Float in the Void": CS
Six years ago, Kelly Kemp, backed by Bangers, released two tracks that whetted my appetite to hear more from that combination. The Hippaes features two-thirds of Bangers with Kemp once again taking up lead vocals. Yes, there are moments where I'm reminded of that previous single but there is so much more to this collaboration than I had expected. For me, "Truffletown" is the killer track, kicking off with a beautifully sounding guitar intro and telling the tale of misplaced sexual advances whilst featuring ■ Fugazi-sounding refrain of "I'm in love with another." I'd not disagree with the self-description of The Hippaes ■ making "music of punk origin," ■ those roots are easily heard from start to finish. However, this also has a sense of weirdness previously found in the solo work of guitarist Roo Pescod and this adds up to ■ very winning formula. All 'round great stuff. —Rich Cocksedge (Keroleen)

INFERNO: *Anti Hagenbach Tape—The Beginning*: LP

I've publicly stated my adoration of Inferno many times over the years

and anyone familiar with their crazed brand of hardcore understands. Like Void, Deep Wound, and other bands from the early '80s, theirs is ■ sound that precariously pirouettes ■ the razor's edge that separates "tight" delivery from absolute chaos—there ■ no shortage of moments where it sounds like they're on the verge of completely collapsing, yet they never do. This look back at their inaugural demo tape—its first time on vinyl, I believe—shows this quality was there in their sound at the very beginning and they only learned over time to pull off the hat trick at much faster velocities. Very fuggin' cool to ■ this available for ■ new gen of punks to soak up and marvel. Thumbs way, way up here. —Jimmy Alvarado (Power It Up)

INFIRMITIES:

The Faith and the Fury: 7" EP

Christian "street punk." No thanks. —Jimmy Alvarado (Malt Soda)

INTENSIVE CARE: *This Is Exactly Who You Are*: 7" EP

Virulent low-end dissonance, chaos, and angry blurt-blurt vocals built on top of rhythmic drumming. The soundtrack to your next nightmare, babe. —Jimmy Alvarado (Iron Lung, ironlungrecords.bigcartel.com)

IZZY TRUE: *Nope*: LP

Similar to label mates All Dogs and Outer Spaces, Izzy True, from Ithaca, N.Y., performs '90s indie pop (think Stephen Malkmus, PJ Harvey, and

Breeders) with sparse drums, ■ bass that thumps like ■ heartbeat, and ■ barebones production. The star, though, is Izzy Reidy's achingly assured vocals that resound through gritted teeth, like ■ "Jamie": "Had you only been some villain / Don't think I'd have been less willing." It's in these moments—where self-discovery, anxiety, and raw sexuality drip from shimmering guitars and plaintive melodies—where Izzy True stands apart. On *Nope*, Reidy grapples with magic, divination, and witchcraft, and oddly enough, this album has found me at my most receptive because my best friend, a badass bruja, read my tarot for the first time only a few weeks ago. I'm tempted to call it fate. (In fact, the album art depicts a tarot spread of the World, the Hermit, and the Fool.) Regardless, Reidy's voice and lyrics speak to me. "Mr. Romance," "Total Body Erasure," and "Nope" will be on repeat for a while. —Sean Arenas (Don Giovanni, dongiovannirecords.com)

JACK LEE:

Bigger Than Life: Anthology 2: LP

At long last, this material from the early '80s is back in print. Jack Lee fronted The Nerves. After they imploded, he went solo. Featured on this collection ■ two songs that became fairly big hits for Blondie and Paul Young. Young radically reworked his version; Blondie steered fairly close to the original. But this also features ■ whole boatload of power pop classics that should have been hits. There ■



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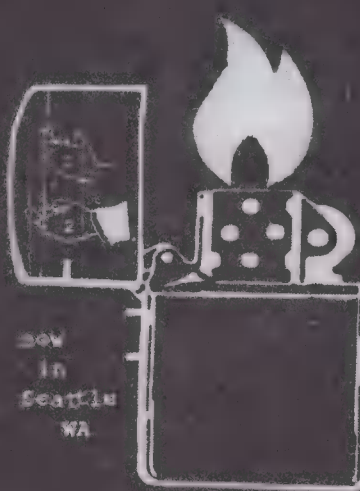
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■ couple songs that have ■ bit too much of the dated keyboard film still on them, but that's minimal here. It should not deter you from purchasing this product. The only thing missing is ■ essay with detailed liner notes. That would have been valuable. But the starburst vinyl is stunning. The cover art shows Lee giving James Dean ■ run for his money. Buy this and get ready for a new Jack Lee record, too. I am not kidding you ■ that one, my friends. Essential! —Sean Koepenick (Alive/Natural Sound)

JACK'S SMIRKING REVENGE: The Lonesome Corroded West/ G-G-G-Ghosts! CS

A demo tape containing two "EPs" from this Denver, Colo. band with what sounds like clear influence from three bands: The Weakerthans, Sundowner, and Against Me! In that context, this isn't a bad start, despite some off-key vocals. If considered ■ demo instead of two EPs, it feels like a foundation for ■ solid future band. This sound is not my cup of tea at all though, so maybe the rawness would appeal to some folks out there in gloomy, emo music-land. —Chad Williams (Casket Collective, facebook.com/casketcollective)

KICKER: Rendered Obsolete: LP

Scene stalwarts who make ■■ look young with an uncompromising kick to the face and groin. Pete The Roadie's English snarl in full effect. Conflict meets the Special Duties in ■■ Oakland squat. I have a house full of

this stuff, it's great at what it is, but ■ little one dimensional for me. Fans of UK82 schlock would be wise to take ■ listen. —Tim Brooks (Tankcrimes / Pirates Press)

LAST RITES:

Fascism Means War? EP

Turns out that this here record is ■ reissue of a record from 1984, which explains how they got away with the name (you know, since there was the Boston Last Rights with Choke) and a song about nuclear conflict with the Soviets. Anyhow, Last Rites were ■ British group and they have ■ sound that comports with their place in time. Reminds me of Chaos U.K. in ■ good way. The music itself still sounds good. However, while one song is about corrupt politicians using might as right and another is about world peace, the previously mentioned song about nuclear conflict with Soviets feels outdated, as does the track about being profiled by cops for being ■ punk/skin. Though outdated, they are still ■ reflection of the time. Pretty good overall. —Vincent (Loud Punk)

LEOPARD PRINT / GLUT:

Too Big ■ Fail: CS

Two tough bands with slightly different approaches ■ this split tape. Leopard Print are wilder and thrasher and ■■ '80s; kind of Motörhead style. I feel like they've probably done acid. Glut is guttural and tighter and a little more conventional, almost youth crew style. I'm not here for that. I haven't

heard funny samples between songs on ■ album in forever (highlights on the Glut side include Bill Hicks and, I think, Abner Jay). It's 1999 again. —Matt Werts (Levee Dog, facebook.com/levee-dog-records)

LIFE LIKE: Prisoners: CS

St. Louis. Not just home to Nelly. Also home to sincere, angry, and melodic-enough-to-warrant-multiple-listens *hardcore punk*. Not the separate definitions of those two words, but the genuine combination of the two; from the same screaming breaths of Negative Approach or Battalion Of Saints. It wouldn't be out of place finding a home on the Deranged label. The ■■ of dubbing your demo on the first side of ■ Huey Lewis and the News cassette is strongly backed. Recommended. —Matt Seward (Kreepreet, lifelikehe.bandcamp.com)

LIQUIDS: Self-titled: EP

Six punk rock crankers right here! "Take the Bait" is a quick and manic whirlwind that pushes you from side to side, as well ■ having something to say about race and gender in the process. "Malignant Humor" is the choice cut of choice cuts on here for sure. It has this riff that just rips and tears ■ hole in the world while the overall delivery is in your face and unapologetic. "Already Dead" closes off with ■■ great guitar work and ■ mix of early punk from both sides of the Atlantic, blended with some early '60s rock influences. Liquids ■■ of

the best bands going, without a doubt! Someone please put all of their tape releases on vinyl. That's something that really needs to happen. —Matt Average (Yeah You!, yeahyourecords.bigcartel.com)

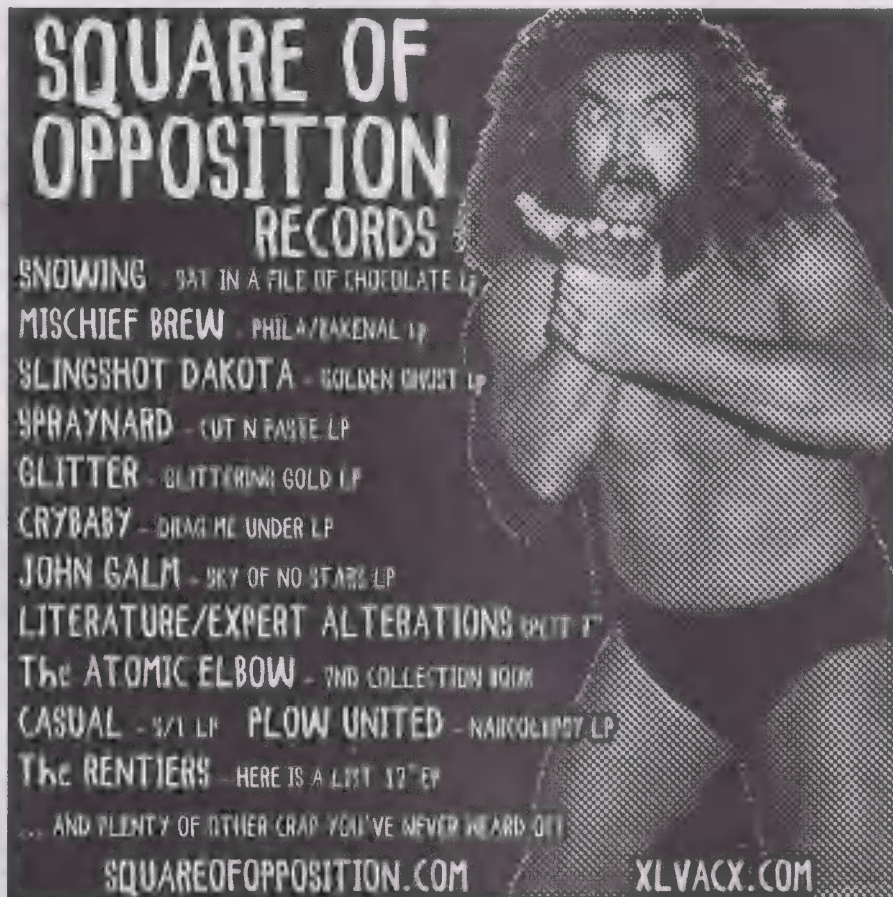
LOPEZ, THE: KIM Yr Selfie: 7"

Too many bands use synths to sound sad pretty. Don't they know what these machines can do? The Lopez dial the synths into a sound somewhere between tornado siren and an exploding microwave. They use that ■ a foundation for these jarring, percussive songs that, despite being caustic at their core, toy enough with poppy melodies so ■ to get stuck in your head. It's a fun ride. —MP Johnson (thelopez.bandcamp.com)

LOS JACKS / ESKROFULA:

Exiliados: CS

This absolutely wonderful split tape of two Latino punk bands blew ■■ away. Los Jacks is from Toledo and Eskrofula is from New York. Both bands play catchy, mainline punk, and both bands sing in Spanish. Reminiscent of the vibe present in the streetpunk explosion of the mid-1990s, there's a real ■■ of vitality here. I especially enjoy that these bands aren't afraid to embrace the catchier, less trendy elements of punk that so many people seem to be shying away from lately. I'd love to see this tape repressed ■ vinyl. It's not a demo-level situation whatsoever. —Art Ettinger (TPV, eskrofula.bandcamp.com)




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LOW CULTURE: "Hard to Stay" b/w "Lonely Summer": 7"

Side A's an almost power pop number that brings to mind the Tranzmitors, which is not a comparison I would've leaned towards in a bajillion years when it came to this band. Flip's an almost '50s doo-wop deal, run through a strainer full of fuzzed amps and then blanched over low heat with more than a pinch of melody. I can see why these wouldn't have fit that well in a full-length; they're a little different. Nicely done. Really enjoy the faithful packaging homage to the singles of yore. (Kisses fingertips.) Mwah. —Keith Rosson (La-Ti-Da)

LOWER ECHELON, THE: Come in the Loud: CD

This is great songwriting and execution from L.A.'s The Lower Echelon, whose 2014 release *Descent Of...* also got a positive review from yours truly. The last track on this four-song release is a rough, rowdy, and just plain fun cover of The Jam's "In the City." Check this band out! —Jon Mule (Unpossible, unpossiblerecords.com)

LUKA FISHER: Mind Drone Business: CD

Life is too short for me to pretend to understand the point or appeal of ambient drone music. Does that make me closed-minded? Out of touch? A little unnecessarily defensive right now? Maybe. But that's what this is: some spooky noises with dial-up sound samples and like two guitar

notes per song. If that's what works for you then go for it, or listen to literally any other improvised ambient drone track, or record the sound of a garbage truck driving by on your cell phone and call it an album. Nothing personal against Luka Fisher, but this is not for me. —Indiana Laub (Silber, silberspy@silbermedia.com, Silbermedia.com)

LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS:

Huff My Sack: LP

Lumpy And The Dumpers is probably the closest I come to listening to a hardcore band, but I don't really think they're a hardcore band. They're on the aggressive end of the punk spectrum, that aggression being in the harsh guitar tones and throat-shredding shout vocals. But Lumpy is too playful and silly to really be a hardcore band. We all know that hardcore bands and fans take themselves way too seriously. And a song like "Huff My Sack?" Isn't that something a sophomore pop punk band c. 1996 might have written? Anyhoo, it's good to hear a proper long-player from Lumpy, the only twelve-incher they have is a collection of early 7"s (at least that I know about). It's almost impossible to keep up with their releases and I have all those 7"s (I think) so I didn't buy the collection LP. To me, this is Midwestern punk at nearly its finest. Even if the band doesn't want to admit it, this record is a labor of love and a real one of the junk spewed out by the coasts. —Sal Lucci (Lumpy, spottedrace.bigcartel.com)

MAD EXISTENCE: Self-titled: 7" EP

Sinewy hardcore with a definite East Coast feel and a singer with a career in voicing a muppet. Sure to get fists pumping, pits circling, and bodies flying. —Jimmy Alvarado (Vinyl Conflict)

MAKEWAR: Developing a Theory of Integrity: CD

I don't keep up with Red Scare Records much these days, but everything I hear from them still manages to be the catchiest goddamn thing I've ever heard. Shit. MakeWar is a pop punk band that uses a little of that scratchy raise-a-beer flannel-punk to balance out the earnest early-2000s emo pop sound that's really at the heart of this. I'm thinking Brand New's pop-punkiest era mixed in with something a little gruffer, like Strung Out or The Menzingers. Clean and accessible it can be, but it's a lot more interesting than the slick and shiny Warped Tour fare that description might suggest. This album took about a song and a half to convince me that I'm gonna start hearing a lot more about MakeWar very soon. —Indiana Laub (Red Scare, toby@redscare.net, redscare.net / Gunner, mail@gunnerrecords.com, gunnerrecords.com)

MALLWALKERS: Dial 'M' for...: LP

Mallwalkers sound like a funk version of Blatz! Or maybe a peace punk version of The B-52's! Or maybe if you mixed '90s U.K. riot grrrl band Huggy Bear with the "rock with

horns" sensibilities of Rocket From The Crypt! Whatever this sounds like, I like it. These party rock songs of varying styles, as some are heavy rock songs while others take a more funky approach. Both female and male vocals are present on almost every song with a mostly shouty delivery style that really drives the punk influence home. Good stuff. —Mark Twistworthy (Peterwalkee)

MANNEQUIN PUSSY: Romantic: LP

On their second release, Philadelphia punks Mannequin Pussy manage to make the tightest mess I've listened to today, this week, this month, maybe even this year. With the eleven songs clocking in at about seventeen minutes, there is no extra anything here. A big shift from 2014's *GP*, *Romantic* builds on the pop influence of the earlier stuff by integrating some direct East Coast hardcore sound, creating something Pixies-like, both heavy and tender. Like Dilly Dally's Katie Monks, Marisa Dabice's vocals weave the ethereal and the raw with lyrics that are a vision of twenty-first century romance that's honest about the fact that dealing with feelings in a world so deeply fucked up is a trying enough task without taking it out on yourself. —Theresa W. (Tiny Engines, tinyengines.com)

M.D. / M.D.A.R.T.S. Mobocracy: LP

To say that M.D.C. is a band that means a lot to me is a gross understatement. Like many kids who got into punk

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in the dark years just after the first hardcore wave came and went, M.D.C. was one of the first fast bands I listened to. I was instantly hooked. I kept up with them over the years, and even some of their less-known releases are favorite records of mine. Today, as ■ public defender, M.D.C. serves as the soundtrack for my occupation. It's been an exciting time as an M.D.C. fan lately, with the release of frontman Dave Dictor's memoir, Dictor's being interviewed by *Rolling Stone* after Green Day referenced M.D.C. in an anti-Trump chant on national TV, and Beer City's dedication to preserving M.D.C.'s recorded output. This reissue of M.D.C.'s 2009 split with the U.K. streetpunk band Restarts is Beer City's twelfth vinyl M.D.C. reissue, packaged beautifully on color vinyl. Dictor's signature vocal stylings and political lyrics shine on this release, and the Restarts side is full of the catchy tropes Restarts are known for. This reissue came out on Black Friday 2016. Were you beating up your fellow citizens at some shitty chain store, or were you looking for this record at your cool locally owned business? *Mobocracy* is ■ must. The world needs M.D.C. more than it ever did. Thankfully, Dave Dictor and company are still there for us. —Art Ettinger (Beer City)

MELTAWAYS, THE: Self-titled: 7"

The singer of this band has one of those voices that made me think the record was on the wrong speed. I was in a mood and went with it. I listened

to both sides a couple of times both ways. I honestly don't mean it as ■ insult; some vocals just translate that way. And there's value in that, because I think the record sounds listenable at 33 and 45. On 45, the band has ■ grungy edge with song structures similar to the sloppy San Francisco sound that I like, but is becoming a bit overplayed at the moment. On 33 it loses its frivolity ■ bit and becomes ■ bit more thoughtful. Pick this up and check it out at both speeds. If you don't like one, you might like the other. —Billups Allen (What's For Breakfast, wfbrecords.com)

MESSIA: Self-titled: LP

If I were a DIY punk filmmaker, then Messrs would be the DIY punk band that I would want to create soundtracks for my films. Sludgy guitar noise and a voice that begs and claws and haunts from out of the speakers. There is really interesting stuff to behold here. —Jon Mule (Heel Turn)

MOOR MOTHER: *Fetish Bones*: CD

It's difficult to review Moor Mother's *Fetish Bones* because it's unlike anything I've ever heard before, except for maybe the more experimental and confrontational side of anarcho. Artist, poet, musician, and activist Camae Ayewa unleashes a thought-provoking aural barrage that defies both rap and punk. It's not a collection of songs, in the traditional sense, but a series of modulated poetry layered on sample-heavy electronic

noisescapes. There are no hooks. No power chords. No singalongs. The "songs" are acts of protest in and of themselves, deconstructing musicality and refusing to conform to any genre. *Fetish Bones* is not an album you enjoy but one that makes you angry and gets you off your ass. It provides inspiration, sparks discussion, and reminds you of what you have forgotten or tried to suppress. In that sense, who gives a fuck if it isn't catchy because few songwriters can wake one up like Moor Mother. —Sean Arenas (Don Giovanni, dongiovannirecords.com)

MOOSEKNUCKLE SANDWICH:

***Pen15 Club*: 6"**

From the band name and name of the tape, I knew that I wasn't looking at any high-level shit, especially with song titles like "Shitty Stinky Farts." Figured I was in for a Queers rip off. But I got a degenerate Grumpies that plays super fast but has no guitars. The vocals—particularly the female vox—are pretty unintelligible most of the time because of the tempo and timbre, but you are never going to hear somebody sing the words "shitty stinky farts" with such intensity. Not all of the lyrics are bathroom humor, but the ones that aren't are a bit too vague for me to pick up on. The songs are short and easily digestible, and enjoyable enough to listen through several times in ■ row. Color me pleasantly surprised. —Vincent (Related)

MY NAME IS JOE:

***Stories of Our Cities*: CD**

Man, oh man. So close, yet so far. Musically, this sounds like it shoulda come from Britain in the '80s, but it's from present day San Francisco. It has a very poppy, catchy radio-friendly punk sound with elements here and there that would be at home in the Twin Cities. But the vocals. The vocals are just a bridge too far for me. They are super gravelly with an English accent—but not like Frankie Stubbs. I'm not necessarily opposed to either and can quite enjoy both at times, but the lyrics ■■■ more talk-sung than sung. And it sounds like the vocalist wants to pack a ton of meaning into every line, which becomes ■ bit oppressive. Again, so close, yet so far. —Vincent (mynameisjoe.bandcamp.com)

NEUROSIS: *Fires within Fires*: CD/LP

The latest full-length from Neurosis is only five songs, but it still clocks in at forty-one minutes. *Fires within Fires* is a throwback to some of the band's best work: *Through Silver in Blood* and *Times of Grace*. While nothing is ever going to top those albums, this album still seems stronger than the past few albums; it's got some grandiosity and range, with both sinister and epic sounds, all encased in a general darkness for which the band is known. Neurosis understands how to build and grow, pull things back, and then explode all over the place. Steve von Till and Scott Kelly's vocals are impassioned and fierce; the band's



riffs are fat and heavy. Still, this album isn't breaking any new ground. Yet, for those who have been following the band for years, this is certainly worth picking up. —Kurt Morris (Neurot, Neurotrecords.com)

NO IDEA: Jag Hatar Punk: LP

Originally recorded in 1986, this is fast, crossover-ish hardcore punk from Finspang, Sweden. If you've clawed your way through the masters and you're on the hunt for obscure, international nuggets of thrash, Beer City (and Just 4 Fun, who released this as ■ 7" in 2015) are truly trustworthy guides. But don't forget about the backyards and rec centers, where teenagers are still picking up instruments and unleashing belligerently delightful racket like this. —Daryl (Beer City)

NOFX: First Ditch Effort: CD

Fans tend to shrug off longevity these days. Now that punk's truly aged, the list of bands to hit the thirty-year mark has grown exponentially. NOFX have hit that milestone, but let's not forget we're working with a practically original lineup here. That's no easy feat. Really. The members of the three-decade club that have that many original members are few and far between. These guys deserve some major praise. I suppose if you use the argument that they've received plenty, that would be a fair point. But you'd be overlooking how the sheer musicianship behind these

new songs (and all of them, for that matter). Naysayers play the "punk" card well—you know, they're a shitty band playing trivially simplistic songs. They're not, and they never have been. Saying NOFX can't play their instruments would be a laughable offence. *First Ditch Effort* is a NOFX record through and through. Maybe not as many ripping solos and time changes as *Ribbed* or *The Longest Line*, but not significantly far off either. It's ■ healthy dose of classic NOFX, a band that never takes themselves too seriously. The new record has a couple slabs from recent singles ("Sid & Nancy," "Six Years on Dope") and a nice homage to Tony Sly. Longtime fans won't be disappointed. —Steve Adamyk (Fat, Fatwreck.com)

NOI!SE: The Real Enemy: LP

First off, let me tell you I love this band. I have all their records and listen to them on the reg. I'm fussy with my "streetpunk," as there's so much, of which eighty percent is rehearsed garbage. Noi!se have managed to blend so many great influences to make a totally unique, arresting sound. One part Bad Religion, one part Leatherface, one part Dropkick Murphys, one part the Business and blend until you have perfect texture. Lyrics are on point from ■ socio political/working class angle. Recording is big and not too clean. There's passion. Is that what most of these bands are missing? Singer Matt is ■ soldier in the Middle East (take

that ■ you will) and I wonder if that's where some of the hunger comes from? Be damned if I know, but I really, really like this record. The guest appearances of known faces just add to ■ already killer package. Nice one, guys. Real nice. —Tim Brooks (Pirates Press, piratespressrecords.com)

NOPES: Never Heard of It: LP

This is already one of my favorite records of the year, so you can imagine how pleased I was to see this in my stack of records to review this issue. This is a record that isn't easy to pigeonhole, as I hear all kinds of things while listening to it. Imagine *Land Speed Record* era-Hüsker Dü mixed with the overall sensibility (but not necessarily the sound) of The A-Frames with Greg Ginn sitting in as a guest guitarist, and you'll be left with something in the area of what this is like. The songs have definite sugary hooks, but they're covered in a layer of frantic, somewhat angular and spastic guitar work with a driving rhythm section. It's good, really good even, and comes highly recommended. —Mark Twistworthy (Magnetic Eye, merhq.net)

OCCURRENCE:

This Party Will Live Forever: CD

Man, oh, man. Getting through this disc was worse than a visit to the dentist (no offense Dr. Bae!). Firstly, one could call this an electronica release with what the PR company calls "wry, postmodern storytelling."

My ears tell me that this is basically a one-man show with that one man using what sounds like looping software ■ la Acid Pro or FruityLoops and adding some processed vocals. —Garrett Barnwell (Self-released, thepastwilllastforever.com)

OOZER: Mumble Songs: The Songs of Mumble EP

First of all, this is the best EP title I've seen in maybe a decade. The second EP (after 2015's *szhjeig inning*) from some of Austin's finest heavy sludge punks, this record is the aural equivalent of that internet video from years ago where the fake baby is left in a stroller on a city street and when somebody comes up to check on it, it flings up and has an evil laugh and devil eyes. Constantly surprising yet somehow grounded, Oozzer manages to bring together doom and precision, exuding some truly dark, gloomy riffs with super tight turnarounds that perfectly create the label "pop sludge" in its own image. From song titles like "French Fries" and "Putrid Person" to production credits like "Steel Balbini—production extraordinaire and #1 dave matthews fan," these folks are messing with you (and themselves) because they love you and want you to have ■ good time. And it's working. —Theresa W. (Self-released, ooozer.bandcamp.com)

ORDINARY LIVES: Time Tested: 7" EP

In ■ recent interview, I saw Steve Roche describe this EP ■ "very much



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SCHOOL DAMAGE Dumb Dads tape

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SCHOOL DAMAGE Buttered Lives LP

MEDICATION Warm Places tape

SPOKENEST Gone, Gone, Gone LP

MEDICATION Warm Places tape

SPOKENEST Gone, Gone, Gone LP

LEATHERFACE Various artists

LeBarons Various artists

The Rebel Spell Various artists

DOGS (Canada) Various artists

when in the "sh" listen to Equalling/Distor, Well Felt/Void, Rotine This, & Grasshopper

in the Baroness/Torche vein" and, really, who am I to disagree with a man about his band? There's definitely that metal quality, especially in the mix of super fast riffs and chugging pace, but there's also something more intricate and introspective too. These songs are definitely the center of a three circle Venn diagram that brings together a member each from Bridge And Tunnel, Off Minor, and Nimbus Terrifix: there's the grindcore-influenced super thick and mobile bass lines, impressive noodley guitar riffs that rock, and super intricate and precise math-y drumming. The vocals have some real hardcore conviction and clarity, with lyrics that ruminate on getting older but in a way that balks at the question itself, rather than lamenting the subject. Something between chaotic and regimented, this is a harbinger of great things to come. —Theresa W. (Yo Yo, yoyorecords. blogspot.de / Tor Johnson / State Of Mind / Square Of Opposition, square_of_opposition@hotmail.com)

GRINDCORE: **Ladrones de Mú EP**

Fast, thrashy hardcore punk that brings to mind early U.S. hardcore—I hear strains of Black Flag in the guitar playing and in the drum intro to "Brand Flag" and a touch of the Dead Kennedys in "Ingrejinha Über Alles"—except these guys hail from Brazil, and add a little bit of their own spin to the sound. They can be urgent and somewhat intense in their playing,

but there's a sense of light heartedness that touches everything here. Seek this one out, as well as their split with La Flingue from a couple years back. —Matt Average (Yeah You!, yeahyourecords.bigcartel.com)

PERSONAL AND THE PIZZAS

Self-titled: LP

I feel that this band was made for me. I love shtick and I love pizza. Their last LP *Raw Pie* was my introduction and I was blown away. Hilarious, cartoonish tales of being New Jersey street toughs obsessed with pizza and set to a soundtrack steeped heavily in Ramones, Stooges, and Dead Boys. They had me at pizza. I set about collecting every single they put out after that. Great singles, all of them and now a new LP. It's like dough thrown from heaven! Here's the thing, though. When I got *Raw Pie* way back when, I didn't realize that it was mostly a singles compilation (since I hadn't heard them before). Now here we have the new album, and more than half of it is the singles that I have been collecting since then. I was a little sad that I already had most of this, but hey, less record flipping, right? As for the tunes, they're amazing! The Pizzas rock hard in that mid-'70s way and they come correct. They lyrics are hilarious, tackling important issues such as fighting, brain damage, being bored, rock'n'roll, and going down on your significant other. I just want to know one thing. Where are the pizza references? Where's the shtick? All it

would take to make this album perfect would be one or two songs along the lines of "Pepperoni Eyes" or "\$7.99 for Love." Yo Personal, where's the pizza, you jive turkey? Now I can only love this album instead of obsess over it. —Ty Stranglehold (Slovenly)

PHANTOM FAMILY: Self-titled: EP

Phantom Family provides four tracks of musically proficient hardcore of the late '90s/early '00s variety. That is, the songs here aren't just blasts of noise that would only appeal to punks and hardcore folks. Rather, they incorporate elements that evoke memories of early Clutch records or major label Melvins records, as they get slow, heavy, and kinda heady while remaining fierce and aggressive. Definitely not for the purists, but still pretty damn good. The more I listen, the more I like it, especially the longer tracks that move away from straight-up hardcore sound. —Vincent (phantomfamily.bandcamp.com)

PLANES MISTAKEN FOR STARS:

Prey: CD/LP/CS

The latest album (in over six years) from Planes Mistaken For Stars is a burner, man. It's a goddamn spark that shows that not only are PMFS back, but they're putting out some of the best music they've ever created. While I first fell in love with the band right about the time they formed in the late 1990s, their material after their departure from Deep Elm in the early 2000s got harrier, rougher, and darker.

Gared O'Donnell's vocals started sounding like he was smoking a lot of cigarettes but now things seem a little cleaner—both O'Donnell's vocals and the band's sound. Yet it still retains a hard sound, full-on, with aggression. There's one acoustic tune ("Black Rabbit") but, all in all, these ten songs show the band rocking in the shadows. They're never going to be the biggest thing, but they're sure to enthrall their cult following, and hopefully gain some new fans along the way. —Kurt Morris (Deathwish)

PLEASURE GALLOWES: Positivity: 7"

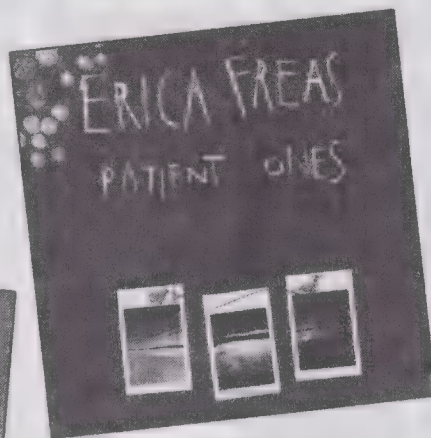
I actually gasped when I saw this record. The cover art is by Benjamin Marra, one of my favorite current comic book weirdos. Marra's work is batshit crazy; very greasy and adolescent while also having a cold sheen. His art is never quite right, but always on point. So is true with this cover, which is a visual depiction of the band's name: monstrosity armored dominatrixes going a little bit further than delivering pleasure to their intestine-spewing clients. Hell, the band is pictured in the record even looks like a Marra creation, and their sound has a similar essence—punk that is totally messy despite clearly knowing the score. This is a keeper. —MP Johnson (Pelican Pow Wow)

POISON RITES: Demo: EP

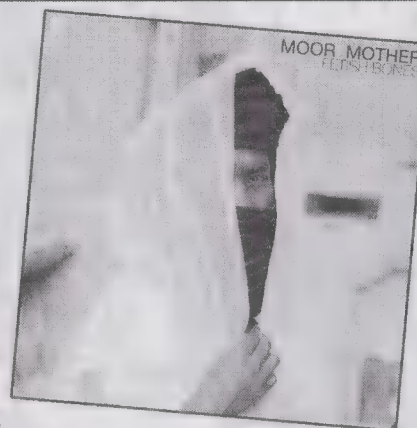
Really good meat-and-potatoes punk rock that sounds like an early U.S. bar band that stumbled on a couple



SAMMUS
"PIECES IN SPACE" CD/LP



ERICA FREAS
"PATIENT ONES" CD/LP



MOOR MOTHER
"FETISH BONES" CD/LP

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early Eater and Front singles in the import section of their local record store. There's a heavy rock'n'roll vibe and the whole thing is blown out and distorted to pieces, but the melodies shine through the noise in perfect little pieces. The recording sounds like the Mummies records but the songs shake off most of that sugary vibe, dropping in its place ■ more *Killed By Death* feeling a-la the Shit Dogs. Excited to see what these freaks do in the future. —Ian Wise (Self-released, poisonrites.bandcamp.com)

POOR LILY: *Dirt* ■ *Everyone*: LP

This fascinating half-hour concept album was recorded straight through, after much rehearsing. Inspired by the work of Edward Snowden and others, the lyrics are about the NSA's horrific surveillance program. Musically, Poor Lily plays fierce straightforward punk, with radical tempo changes and aggressive vocals. Packaged with ■ very cool book of artwork comprised of art made from text released by the heroic leakers, this is a class act all around. There's even ■ mock business letter, replete with redactions, on the back of the lyric sheet. We live in scary times, and Poor Lily's not feeling it. Neither should you. *Dirt on Everyone* is ■ successful musical experiment if ever there was one. —Art Ettinger (TV-Mayor, poorlily.com)

PRIVATE ROOM: *Forever and Ever*: LP

The cover art simultaneously drew me in and frightened me. One of my

most memorable nightmares to date involved me in a dark room with a scale catching grains of sand falling from the sky. Each microscopic grain weighed ■ ton, it seemed, causing my knees to buckle and my sanity to be tested. The album artwork depicts a man seated with a large rock upon his head while being tethered to ■ small pile of rubble and debris. The similarities were subtle yet familiar so I ignored any possible triggers and put this platter on my turntable to discover that the music is just as nightmarish ■ J. Gallego's impeccable artwork. *Forever and Ever* is eight ear-aching tracks that don't go down easy and defy categorization, although you could slide this somewhere between Unsane and Big Black and not be wrong. Insalubrious and uneasy: just the way I like my music. —Juan Espinosa (Iron Lung)

PROLETARIAT, THE:

Soma Holiday: CD

After over thirty years, this band from Fall River, Mass. has decided to give it another go. Having witnessed their Boston area reunion show recently, I can testify that we are all lucky to have them back. This is the first in a series of reissues. There are traces of other bands' sounds you may be familiar with, but the anger and outrage shapes these songs into something else. Driving bass, spiky guitar, fierce vocals, and pounding drums are the name of the game. But the message is still now—"working classes unite!"

"Events/Repeat" makes more sense today than ever before. Thanks for coming back, gentlemen. Top shelf. —Sean Koeppenick (SS)

PROTRUDERS:

Untucked in Nantucket: ■

The backside of this tape kills. The whole side is one long experimental track with three distinct parts. It begins with a seemingly cyclical drumbeat with various noise accompaniments throughout, and continues with it for ■ good while before transforming into a cover of Electric Eels' "Agitated," and then returns to single-instrument weirdness courtesy of the bass. The front side of the tape has traditionally structured songs. The first one has some Meatmen-esque metal riffage before it evolves into noisy weirdo punk cacophony and then returns to the riffage. The rest of the songs on the front stick to noisy punk sensibilities. The stuff on the front is good, too, but I want more of the shit on the back. Looking forward to what comes next. —Vincent (Kiss The Void / Joe's No Frills, jchamandy@hotmail.com)

P.S. ELIOT: *HOW NOT TO*: CD

On July 31st, 2009, I saw P.S. Eliot perform with Hop Along and Avi Buffalo at the Hickey Underworld, a now defunct punk house in Long Beach. There were maybe forty people at the show, and it was there I would buy *Introverted Romance in Our Troubled Minds*, which remains one of my favorite LPs. Now, seven years later,

Don Giovanni Records has released P.S. Eliot's complete discography. It's all here: their second LP, *Sadie*; the gleefully lo-fi *Bike Wreck Demo*; the *Living in Squalor 7"*; and a slew of home recordings. If you've never heard P.S. Eliot, then you're in for a treat because sisters Katie and Allison Crutchfield craft earnest, lyrically-driven indie pop. (Since their breakup, the Crutchfield sisters have gone on to perform in Waxahatchee and Swearin' but Martha, from Durham, U.K., is the clear heir apparent. However, P.S. Eliot, for my money, is irreplaceable.) Let the heartache wash over you. Absorb the witticisms: "Baby, I'll be your muse if you'll always be mine / We spell it out in incoherent love songs." But, as I learned in 2009, never assume that a great band will last forever, so enjoy it while it lasts. —Sean Arenas (Don Giovanni, dongiannirecords.com)

RAMONA: *Sad Brunch*: CD

This band is gorgeous. Yes, I sometimes describe sounds with visual descriptors, and, no, I'm not one of those folks with synesthesia but it ■■■■■ like a cool affliction. Ramona balances quickness and gruff vocals with softness and tender vocals. And then you know what they do? *Hit you with feelings*. I know, it's kinda fucked up to come out of nowhere like that, right? Get ready for ■ silly interaction between your heart and your brain. One is going to tell you that it's just pretty music and it warrants a smile. The other is going to remind you of

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every break up you've ever had and how much it hurts to miss people. You're going to be hit by the happy cry. It's gonna be like wearing sunglasses indoors or something goofy. Ramona is the musical equation of being so full of joy that you feel sad. If you want musical comparisons, they sound like Lemuria, Cayetana, and Jawbreaker. You get the drill. But more importantly, they could play every chord a half step out of tune and I would still be a puddle of emotional mess. And it's over lyrics like: "Somehow when things got bleak I was never feeling hopeless / What have I got to complain about? I was never abandoned." This six-song EP is incredibly filling, but definitely makes you crave more. It's as addicting as loving someone is. Somewhere in an alternate universe Kevin Arnold is blasting "These Days" alone in his room thinking about how sad he is that Winnie Cooper had to move away. *Sad Brunch* fills the gap of loneliness, but with memories of past lovers. Not quite regret, but not quite moving on. It's a crucial piece to keep in your emotional toolbox. —Kayla Greet (Bomb Pop)

REACHAROUNDS: Hunter Gathers LP
Reacharounds continue the age-old tradition of playing creative, complex hardcore in the Midwest. Hailing from Springfield, Mo., they've been around for a bit, and it shows in all the best ways. Uncommonly sophisticated both musically and lyrically, they remind me of the early hardcore era where it wasn't out of the realm of possibility

for an out-there group like Mission Of Burma to take off. Two hundred of these were pressed on white vinyl, so hop on it fast. I bet they're incredible live. They recorded this LP on a Tascam 38, with the beauty of 1/2" reel-to-reel tape capturing Reacharounds in all of their analog glory. The extra effort shows, as the recording is absolutely fabulous. Gather *Hunter Gathers* in your next splurge of music purchases. You won't be disappointed. —Art Ettinger (Push And Pull)

RED DONS:

The Dead Hand of Tradition: LP

Red Dons are one of those exasperatingly good bands who continue to dole out one amazing much-harder-than-it-looks release after another, leaving the rest of us mere band-mortals scratching our heads in flummoxed resignation at the sheer consistency of quality they exude. The work here easily falls in with the driving, dark punk that hints at early West Coast influences but also transcends influences with a few more choice ingredients added to the pie. There's a sound that would handily fit on most bills—poppy enough for the kid-boppers, driving enough for the Dirtmap/Hostage/Modern Action crowd, dark and tense enough for the average hardcore show, and so on—but deeper analysis shows them piling on multiple harmonies, noodly bits, and some nice churn to give the rhythms added color. This latest is in keeping within their traditional

sound yet adding a bit more maturation to the lyrical content. Aces this is, which will be to the surprise of no one, I'll warrant. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

REGIMEN: Sinnesfrid: LP

Was mightily impressed with these Swedes' debut a little more than three years back, and this likewise doesn't disappoint. Unlike many of their punk rock countrymen, they avoid the whole Discharge influence altogether and instead tear into some cracking, largely mid-tempo hardcore steeped in surf with the occasional psychedelic flourish. Eight tunes that'll stomp a mudhole in ye and leave you praying that they somehow find a way to make it stateside for a monster tour with Night Birds. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sista Versen)

RIKK AGNEW BAND: Learn: LP

Listening to Rikk's latest album—his first for Frontier since his first solo effort, *All By Myself*—is to take a veritable master class from one of the primary architects of the prototypical Southern California/O.C. punk rock sound. Everything that made bands like D.I., Adolescents, Social Distortion, Detours—hell, pretty much any band he's come within three feet of—can be found pressed into the grooves here: dual-octave leads, odd time signatures, killer hooks, and monster choruses. To be fair, some of the lyrical content is spotty in places, but even given that you end up finding yourself tossing

away the lyric sheet and resisting the urge to just go off, thanks in no small part to the backup band he's working with, who are well-versed in what makes this style pop. A mighty fine album from greeting to parting. —Jimmy Alvarado (Frontier)

RIPCORD: Defiance of Power: CD

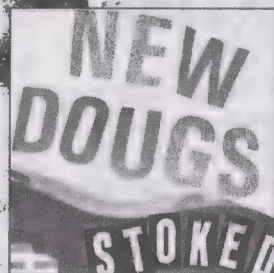
Ripcord were one of the flagship bands for the U.K.'s mid-'80s era of U.S.-influenced hardcore bands. On this reissue of their 1987 debut LP, they take cues from D.R.I. and other hyper-trash bands of the time and slam-bam tune after tune. It handily stands up to their influences—as well as their Scandinavian contemporaries—who were also enjoying a bit of a "golden era" around the same time just a wee bit farther north. Also included is an audience-quality live set from the Netherlands and a rehearsal recording, both from around the same time the album dropped, both of which are a bit raw, but definitely listenable. Nice to see this out in the world again for dumbshits like me who totally missed the boat the first time 'round to get our grubby mitts on a copy. —Jimmy Alvarado (Boss Tuneage)

ROADSIDE BOMBS: War on Love: 7"

For the record, this is my first time listening to Roadside Bombs even though they've been around since 2005. Everything I see on the internet classifies them as an oi band, but I just don't hear it. While it's completely possible that their previous material

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New Dougs: Stoked

Formed by two long time friends of the label, NEW DOUGS is an infectiously catchy NEW WAVE / PUNK duo from CHICAGO with ties to SIG TRANSIT GLORIA, THE BROCKMEYERS, and ETERNAL FLAMES. STOKED is a 7 song diverse and matured melding of all the aforementioned bands yet a refreshing extension sure to produce much more excellent material in the future.

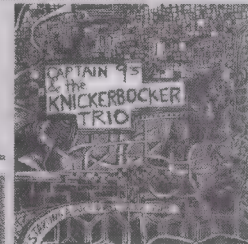
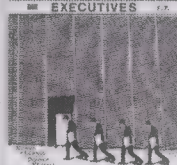


Barren Couples: E/T

Long time friend of label Scott Thomson (ex - CHICAGO THRASH ENSEMBLE, IRON REMINDERS, LITTLEMAN COMPLEX, LETTERBOMBS, and WAYOUTS) is back with more music...this time in the form of a solo noise project. BARREN COUPLES debut is a 4 song collision of sounds that we like to describe as AMBIENT CHILL NOISE...possibly the appropriate soundtrack for sitting alone in a dark basement while ignoring your family. Too harsh?

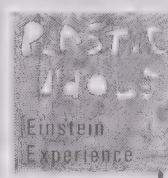
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was much closer to the blue collar genre, that's not what I'm reviewing here. What I get from this single is a bit of The Dwarves, Descendents, some Cobra Skulls, and yes—Cock Sparrer. It's the noodley guitar solos; that's where the bit of oi comes in. There's this part in the title track where the singer belts out, "I've been around the world so ma-n-y times" and all I want to do is loop that over and over. The lead singer's voice is incredibly full and powerful that it's such a pleasure to listen to. Coming round on spin three or four is where I truly start to appreciate the dual guitars and how well they yin-yang each other. Their bass is tuned deep and rich, which could make it easily blend into the background, but it certainly does not. This is a record I really want to listen to with headphones on. It's equal parts power pop, oi, street punk, and rock'n'roll. And, fuck, that drummer rips. I haven't even mentioned that the titular track is about gay rights and acceptance. Just when you thought it couldn't get any better! Plus the cover art is a rad image of Batman and Superman smooching, which reminds me of Jason Buckley's (Every Time I Die) "Make America Gay Again" T-shirt of Iron Man and Captain America making out. I love everything about this. —Kayla Greet (Pirates Press)

SAMMUS: Pieces in Space: CD

Enongo Lumumba-Kasongo, known as Sammus, is a rapid-fire rapper based in Ithaca, N.Y. Her latest release, *Pieces*

in *Space*, skewers internet anonymity, adulthood, nerd culture, anxiety, and the pitfalls of higher education. Her words are vital and prescient, her delivery urgent and fluid, and her beats precise but never robotic. On "Perfect, Dark," an outcry for black female role models, Sammus spits, "Black girls want to have a hero, too / All kids trying to get that mirror view." The beat drops and her voice closes the song—an electric performance that distinguishes Sammus from other rappers because she isn't afraid to be vulnerable and courageous at the same time. But on "Childhood," the Weezer-inspired (trust me, compare it to "Holiday") chorus melody and lyrics demonstrate Sammus's dichotomy: songs that don't pull punches but are nonetheless hook-laden and catchy. This is one of my favorite releases of 2016. Get into it. —Sean Arenas (Don Giovanni, dongiovannirecords.com)

SCARCITY OF TANKS:

Ringleader Lies: CD

Twenty-two tracks of jumpy, jerky post-punk made by people who shred in very intentionally strange ways. And it's a whole lot of people—almost twenty, according to the insert, including members of Nada Surf, Wilco, Swans, and so on. Weird, right? The vocals have that just-barely-off-key quality between shouting and singing that's so deceptively difficult to pull off. Sort of a Nation Of Ulysses or Fugazi feeling, a well-controlled chaos hovering just below the surface. One of the most

recognizable collaborators on this must be Mike Watt—he only features briefly on the album, but Minutemen are the other most obvious comparison to make. About as expertly executed as you'd expect from this cast of players. —Indiana Laub (Total Life Society)

SEX STAINS: SUT-URAN: LP

Jesus, I gotta get out more often. The fact that these cats and I share the same geographic locale and, despite seeing they're playing all over the place, I've not seen them once is goddamned embarrassing. Devastating post-punk here—aggressive without being "hardcore," slinky in all the right places (check out "Oh No (Say What)," which has to be destined to live through the ages as some sort of anthem), experimental without being pretentious, stompin' when the urge arises, and flat-out infectious (I fuggin' dare you to listen to "Who Song Love Song" and not have it embed itself in your noggin) in all the best ways. Yeah, I've heard the hype and didn't really expect much as a result, but goddamn, this is some good tuneage. —Jimmy Alvarado (Don Giovanni)

SHALLOW CUTS:

Empty Beach Town: LP

Shallow Cuts *Storm Watch 7* was their Vitruvian Man. Perfect symmetry, a blueprint for anything to come afterward, art as paradigm. Maybe I have two copies in case one wears out. *Empty Beach Town* is their sculpture of David. Beauty to fall into,

encapsulating, experiential. It's still pop. It's still punk. You'll want to hang out with it, buy it a beer. But it's also love, work, kids, mortgage... living. I definitely have two copies. Members of Dan Padilla, Gateway District, and Madison Bloodbath. —Matt Seward (No Idea, noidearecords.com)

SIR COYLER & HIS ASTHMATIC BAND: Don't Shake: CD

Southern blues-punk outta the Pacific Northwest, specifically Seattle. Less swampy than, say, The Gun Club, theirs is a sound that nonetheless revels in the sleazy voodoo underbelly that fuels rock'n'roll's dark soul. This is tricky terra to tread, but they do so with a nice balance of revelry and reverence. —Jimmy Alvarado (Five-Five Hole, five-fiveholerecords.bandcamp.com)

SPELLS: Staying In > Going Out: LP

Everything that made me dig Spells on their split with Hooper is here. It's a witch's brew of catchy hooks, great vocal harmonies, and equal mixes of grit and pop. The ripping opener, "Freak Out," kicks things off and captures the magic of what makes the band great right from the first track. More mellow tracks like "Better Days," take things down a notch at times, turning up the melodic end of the band's sound without losing any of the other elements that make me dig them. Lyrically, *Staying In > Going Out* is jammed full of singalong parts, that regardless of



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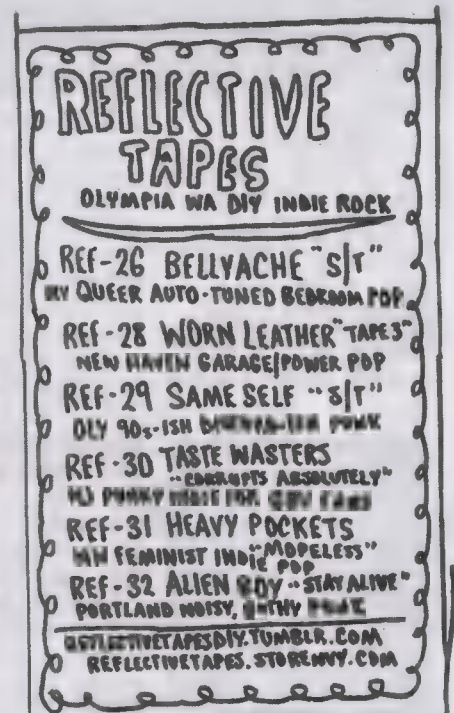
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whether you stay in or go out you're sure to be singing along with Spells the whole time you're listening to this record. —Paul J. Comeau (Snappy Little Numbers, snappylittlenumbers.blogspot.com)

STEEL CHAINS Self-Title 7"

Wow, Portland, you never cease to amaze me. I was already a massive fan of bands such as The Stops, Macho Boys, and Arctic Flowers and now you throw Steel Chains my way? Insanity, I tell you! It's like there is the magic equation that these bands there discovered—how to be heavy and urgent, yet melodic and in a dreamlike state. I don't know what it is, but I can tell you that this band—along with all the others that I just mentioned—are something to behold. The ultimate litmus test: I put the record on, close my eyes, and listen. The hairs on the back of my neck stand up and my eyes water a little bit, like I just took a punch to the face. Yes, it's that rad! —Ty Stranglehold (Dirt Cult)

STICK MEN WITH RAY GUNE:

1,000 Lives in One LP

The stories surrounding this band could all be mythology at this point, but honestly, it's very convincing. Literal, indiscriminate violence is what you get, and the music is just as confrontational. The slow-motion misanthropy of Flipper seeped in the hot coal Texan hate of The Dicks. Soaked burlap vocals that justify the creation of *The Day My Kid Went*

Punk, which came out the same year—1987—this live set was recorded. Drug abuse, lewd acts, and violence may be the quick ticket into the Punk Rock Hall of Fame, but we have to remember that there was a time when no one expected to be remembered. To think SMWRG had any foresight into the legacy they would leave seems optimistic. What they've left us with is deranged, destructive, and undeniably cathartic. Bobby Soxx, RIP. —Daryl (12XU)

SUBTERFUGE:

A Beautiful Chaos 1991-2004: CD

The recording/production quality of Mystic Records is rightfully infamous. It was straight fucking wretched, so bad that audience tapes of a Halloween show Ill Repute played at the studio sound better and more coherent than the actual recording Mystic itself released. Like so many other unfortunate bands, Las Vegas' Subterfuge's sole album suffered mightily from the Mystic Touch—cardboard drums and pie-tin cymbals, guitars straight outta the nearest toilet bowl, and muted bass all awash in reverb—rendering otherwise solid songs from a great band sapped of any power and teetering on the verge of unlistenable. All that notwithstanding, however, I personally fuggin' loved this band, suffered through the "Mystake" sound, and let their tunes work their magic. The tracks from that album are included on this collection and they're still as exasperating as ever.

Thankfully, though, they're paired with assorted demo tracks and a live set from the band's final performance at Fenders in Long Beach. These do a much better job—despite their own limitations—of documenting a creative and often slyly funny band with some damned good songs that stood out during an era when so many others were trying to sound like every other band playing a million miles an hour. Also included is an SLF cover of more recent vintage. There are rumblings of a reunion show making the rounds, so one can't help but hope they'll also spend a little time putting some work into new recordings. —Jimmy Alvarado (Squidhat)

SUBURBAN HOMES, THE:

Are Dumb 12" EP

The opening track "Welcome to Shitsville" appeared to set the tone early on when it glistened with all the piss and vinegar of Buck Biloxi And The Fucks record. However, by the third song, "Barbie & Ken," it soon became apparent that these cats are also tapping into the spirit of early Television Personalities and the Fall. And why not? The Suburban Homes also hail from the land of Benny Hill, rhyming slang, and gravy with everything. Budget punk + boredom + a fuck all attitude = success. Open your minces, up the apples to your local record shoppe, and demand a copy of the new Suburban Homes disc. It's the full monty. —Juan Espinosa (Total Punk, address listed)

SUPER UNSTOP: Auto: CD/LP/CS

What an amazing album. Twelve songs and thirty-four minutes of music meant to shred, inspire, and rage. Featuring former Punch vocalist, Meghan O'Neil Pennie, this Oakland three-piece sounds like a 1990s riot grrrl band met Drive Like Jehu. My girlfriend said O'Neil Pennie sounded like a really angry Kathleen Hanna, which seems accurate. There are equal parts sass and pissed anger in her voice, showing a greater range than she ever did in Punch. The songs are catchy and succinct, with most of the tracks coming in under three minutes. All the parts of the band—guitar, drums, bass, and especially O'Neil Pennie's vocals—are firing perfectly on *Auto*. This is definitely in my top five for the year. If you have ever liked riot grrrl, Drive Like Jehu, Hot Snakes, or Punch, get this. —Kurt Morris (Deathwish, deathwishinc.com)

SUSPECTS, THE: Voice of America: LP

Sad to say that, for me, the Suspects was one of those that got away. Despite being quite well entrenched in this punk thang for many years by that point, their 1994 debut EP and 1995 *Voice of America* album were unknown quantities to me, and that's a goddamned shame. With a sound that would've given Black Market Baby a run for their money a decade earlier, these rambunctious rapscallions decided to reinfuse the much-loved DC scene with straight-up, no-frills punk rock after

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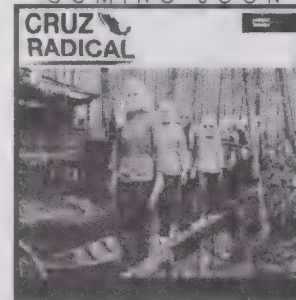
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nearly ■ decade of post-Revolution Summer exploratory noodling and sonic mathematics. Both releases are included here, fulla chutzpah, piss 'n' vinegar to spare, and packing ■ punch that would've earned them ■ spot as "eastern shore emissaries" amongst the Hostage Records-affiliated New Beach Alliance. Pissed I missed out first time 'round, but grateful for ■ second opportunity. —Jimmy Alvarado (Grave Mistake)

SWISS COUTEAU LATEX / AQUARIAN BLOOD: *Gonerfest XIII: 7"*

I've never been to Gonerfest. Came close ■ couple of times, but never actually pulled the trigger. Sounds like the best time in the world, though. The Goner gang, Murphy's, The Hi-Tone et al., it feels as if I've already been there. I know so much about them, hearing all the good stories, like ■ few Ottawa folk walking home through a shit neighborhood and getting chased back to their motel. The Gonerfest single of the year—usually a freebie for gold ticket purchasers—is essentially a promo for two new signings, the Swiss Couteau Latex and Aquarian Blood. The French/Swiss pair do ■ weird, drone-y synth number that's pretty stellar. On the B-side, Aquarian Blood are a cool band to watch out for that Memphis sound we all know and love (and may feature a Nots member?). An important city in the history of modern rock'n'roll. —Steve Adamyk (Goner)

TALKIES: *"Never Fear" b/w "Hollow": 7"*

At the start, the vocals hit ■■ ■■ ■■ breathy and flat. They ■■■ that for most of the release, but they also grew on me in a sweet way. That turning point hits around the middle of the first track. "Never Fear" rounds the chorus and wanders into that '77 New York/Cleveland rock that I love so much. It only lasts a moment, but it's ■ nice departure into Stiv Bators/Johnny Thunders territory. On my second spin, I detected a few lyrics delivered with a slight snarl to them. Just underneath the male lead there is a crooner-y "ooo" strung along the song by a female voice. It adds a nice touch ■■ the guitar meanders between leads and riffs. The drumming sort of wavers in a similar way—flip flopping between snappy taps and robust fills on both tracks. The airy vocals set them somewhere around the tail end of post-punk while flirting with indie. I can imagine tossing this in ■ mix with Slow Dive, Pixies, lollipops, and iced tea. —Kayla Greet (La Ti Da)

TARANTULA: Self-titled: CS

Ex-Cülo and Gas Rag, you get what you expect. Raw-to-the-bone hardcore with ■ bit of mystery (pseudonyms and hard-to-track internet presence). Eagerly anticipating ■ vinyl release to go next to my Cülo records. —Matt Seward (tarantulashocktroops.bandcamp.com)

TEMPER AND HOLD: *The Speed of Travel: LP*

Very reliant on that note-heavy style that bands like Minus The Bear and Pteradon used to such great effect. Mathy, lively, and smart, well produced; it also brings to mind stuff like Life At These Speeds and Hankshaw. The vocals ■■ interesting in the fact that this woman straight-up sings, something a little unusual for the genre. Tight, veering post-rock stuff with some decent momentum behind it. —Keith Rosson (Grafton)

TEMPEST: Self-titled: LP

When I was about sixteen I developed this fascination with grind and metal records that didn't indicate the correct speed on the label that, upon listening, could really go either way (or in some cases had one speed listed that you *swore* was wrong). Nowadays things are different because we're able to check pretty much any record on the internet to ensure we're listening to it the way the band recorded it, but there's something fun about that doubt in finding something so extreme that you aren't even sure you can comprehend what is going on, so you keep hitting the knob on your turntable back and forth to make sense of it. Anyway, I listened to half of this record at 45 RPM before deciding maybe it was supposed to be played at 33. It's good at both speeds, but at 45 it's ■■ erratic, blackened screamo mess that falls somewhere between Orchid and Spazz. At 33 it's ■ heavy

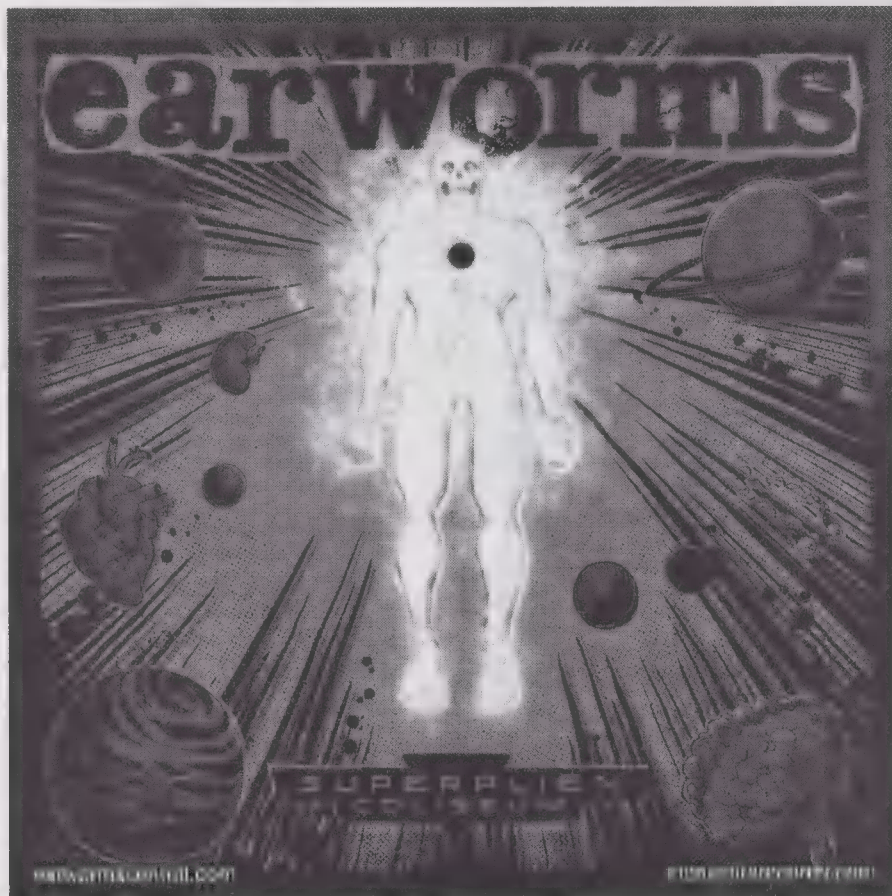
dirge that is still adequately fast but sounds much more cold and insular. Both versions have their own merits, but listening at 33 takes much more patience and commands more of your attention, which I imagine is what the band had in mind. For fans of: heavy, plodding, methodical hardcore-tinged metal like early Thou. —Ian Wise (IFB, ifbrecords.com)

TENEMENT: *The Self-titled Album: LP*

My experience with these kids is admittedly more limited than most, but my recollection is that they were purveyors of rough 'n' tumble pop, punkers not afraid of melody and mid tempos. The sound here has been scrubbed clean and the deliveries more eclectic—scrappy pop punk one minute, then an acoustic number, radio-friendly pop the next. What I find most interesting here is the sly '70s undertow that pops up throughout—slow the tempos down just a smudge, soften the attack, and you've got something groovy for your Chevy van, or at least ■ Weezer record. This ain't meant as a diss, but rather ■ comment on the versatility of the writing itself. While a lot of what's here ain't exactly my cup o' champurrado, it's clear why they're getting the attention they are from places outside their punk base. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

TOMS, THE: *The Tom: LP*

More correctly called "The Tom," this re-release of the 1979 debut album by one-man power pop recording



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project—*cum* apparently notable and Grammy®-nominated studio owner Tommy Marolda—earns my respect right off the bat, simply because, well... I never fucking *heard* of the thing before. I'm pretty sure I would have dug this one just fine had I stumbled across it at age fourteen. I wasn't necessarily *looking* for snappy power pop records at the time, I was looking for punk records with buzzsaw guitars and swearing to which I could jump around after school—but I'd always take a chance on a power pop record as that era's Plan B. Though none of the tape's nineteen songs (twelve album tracks and seven bonus tracks) struck me as meriting a compulsive replay, there are really no bad songs on here, either, and at least The Tom rocked harder than The Shoes. The Tom's influences seem to be along traditional genre lines—either childhood heroes (Beatles, Byrds, Hollies) or fellow 1970s '60s preservationists (Raspberries, Big Star). Then again, sometimes The Tom just sounds happy to exist in the same world as Wings, the Bee Gees, and the Electric Light Orchestra. If the idea here was to make me feel uncool for not owning the original vinyl, I confirm mild success. *Best power pop album with a red-and-white-checkered cover since the Wigs record!* BEST SONG: "The Flame." It would have been cooler if Cheap Trick would have just covered The Toms' song called "The Flame" for their sole #1 hit instead of that stupid ballad they actually used. BEST

SONG TITLE: "Liverpool Girls." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The "TOMS" logo is typeset in Franklin Gothic Heavy, same font as the "RAMONES" wordmark. —Rev. Nørb (Burger/Frodis, burgerrecords.org, frodisrecords.com)

TORTURE LOVE:

They Came Crawling: LP

Artsy stomp 'n' stun not unlike sonically similar fare like, say, Diat. They know how to grab a groove and ride it all the way in, as well as avoiding sinkholes of pretention that would easily sink the less savvy. Very good work being put in here of the type that makes ye curse 'cause it's too damned short, which I guess is how a band wants to leave the listener: wanting more. —Jimmy Alvarado (Protagonist Music)

TOUGH SHITS: "Nicer Than God" b/w "Babes of the Abyss": 7" single

Philly's Tough Shits brings you two twangy garage rock songs replete with shredding guitar solos and harmonic vocals. One side reminds me of Hüsker Dü, the other sounds more like Richard Hell. They're melodic and loose—one of my favorite sonic combinations—and I look forward to hearing more from them. —Lyle (Founding Fathers)

TRASH MANTRA: Self-titled: CD

A guy crooning in reverb-dense French over programmed drums and a keyboard sound collage. It's pretty terrible. —Keith Rosson (Frantic City)

TV CRIME: *Hooligans*: 7"

The title track is a solid bit of hooky, anthemic garage punk with a vocal delivery that sounds vaguely like Jim Carroll. "Wild One" continues in the same fashion, getting the head boppin' and the toes tappin' with no resistance whatsoever. Great single. —Jimmy Alvarado (Static Shock, facebook.com/staticshockrecords)

TV MOMS: Self-titled: CD

Heavy late-'80s/early-'90s grunge influence here. The easiest reference is Nirvana's non-sludgy, less poppy moments, which isn't a bad way to go considering most others would opt to strive for the brass ring folly of the latter. They do the sound justice—despite production that doesn't bite quite like it should—and hints at a sound that probably kills live. —Jimmy Alvarado (TV Moms, tv moms.bandcamp.com)

TWELVE HOUR TURN:

Live at WYNU: 12" CD

What a gem this is—a live set recorded by Steve Roche for WYNU that never aired after being preempted by a basketball game. This performance by a No Idea Southern screamo classic catches a band (and genre) at its peak. Recorded in 1998, this set of seven songs situates the trajectory of the band, giving a taste of where the material for 1999's more urgent *The Victory of Flight* and 2002's near-flawless *Perfect Progress*, *Perfect Destruction* came from. It

came crawling out of central Florida swamps, bringing together the furthest edges of the '90s Gainesville scene, combining the melodic but biting punk of early classics like Spoke and Radon with the post-hardcore complexity of I Hate Myself. It's a rare treat to be surprised with something so intimate that speaks to such a particular historical moment in punk history but that manages to still be so vital and insistent. Feeling this cassette in my hand is a great reminder that Twelve Hour Turn is probably one of the most criminally underrated bands many people have (n)ever heard. —Theresa W. (Bakery Outlet, richrtdiem@yahoo.com, bakeryoutletrecords.com / Rose Quarter, rosequarterrecords.bandcamp.com)

UPPER CRUST, THE / THE GRANNIES: *Lords & Ladies*: Split CD

Long-running band The Upper Crust give five tracks of their very AC/DC-influenced rock. Gives the appearance of being recorded live, but that may be a ruse. Very true to their Bon Scott-Esque roots. No room for misinterpretation. On the "flip," the Jack Endino (cool!) mixed output by the equally veteran Grannies gives you a dose of Dragons-style punk rawk, but with a bit more of a sense of humor. —Steve Adamyk (Saustex)

USELESS PIECES OF SHIT:

Ugly in Public: 7"

Ahhh, 1985. When a band could unironically be made up of dudes with



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names like Shitbird, Dr. Blood, and Dog Shit. Led by Lenny Mental—now of the Besmirchers—UPS, from what I gather, were the go-to punk maniacs in Arizona in the mid-'80s. And based on this record, it's easy to see why. Their sun-baked brains crafted a frothing mess of breakneck punk rock. Like a lot of bands from parts of the world that weren't really on the punk rock map, this is a unique concoction. It's got its own distinct, dirty vibe. Definitely worth a listen. —MP Johnson (Slope)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Meamim (Redux): 2 LP*

This is a compilation of some of the newest crop of underground metal bands covering the classic LP *Meantime* by Helmet in its entirety. In addition, there are six extra cover songs from various other Helmet records as well. If you're into Helmet, you're likely going to be into checking out some of these cover versions. That's why these kinds of tribute records come out, right? Some bands play it straight while others really take these songs under their wing and make them their own. You usually know exactly what you're going to get with tribute records, and there are certainly no surprises here. —Mark Twistworthy (Magnetic Eye, merhq.net)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Sexy: A Las Vegas Punk Rock Tribute to Prince*: CD
In the ninth century, king Alfred the Great wrote that sometimes

we translate word-for-word, and sometimes sense-for-sense. This is, in my opinion, how tribute records work: some songs are played very close to the spirit of the original, and some are much more interpretive. And that is exactly how this record works. As the subtitle indicates, it's a heap of Las Vegas bands offering their takes on the master. Ultimately, the quality of this record for listeners will probably depend on how much they like Prince and to what degree they're okay with bands fucking with the original or not, both of which take place herein. I liked most of the songs on here, with the notable exception of the punked-up version of "Raspberry Beret," the original of which is such an awesome song that it's a potential sacrilege to mess with it in any way. Nonetheless, my knowledge of Prince's work is rather minimal after *Purple Rain*, so I won't speak to the degree of accuracy in the interpretations of his work after 1984. My particular faves were the metal-infused take on "I Would Die 4 U" and the bluegrass version of "The Most Beautiful Girl in the World." In the end, if you like Prince, you'll probably get a kick out of this at the very least. —The Lord Kveldulf (Squid Hat)

VINNY HOOLIGANZ: *Late Nights: 7"*

With a band name like Vinny Hooliganz, you might just be thinking "Oi! Oi! Oi!" like me. Despite their moniker and the album art depicting

the Brooklyn Bridge, don't be fooled. There is no false bravado here, a fear of being too vulnerable. It's all heart, with some pretty great range. In just three songs, Vinny Hooliganz takes the listener from street sounds of "Live and Die in NY," pummels them with a rock'n'roll lovesick lament called "Thursday Night Serenade," and concludes its short but intense journey with "Winter," seemingly a requiem for a friend realized, too late, who might have needed you more than you needed them. Vinny Hooliganz definitely have some tricks up their sleeves. Each of these tracks have been nurtured and lovingly recorded. It's obvious and comes through clear in their melodic harmonies and perfectly synched guitar tones. This 7" is to be treasured, but the online version comes with two extra tracks! —Jackie Rusted (Not Like You, notlikeyourecords.com)

VIOLENCE CREEPS: *Mixtape #1: CS*

Fucking fantastic collection/mix tape of various Violence Creeps (Total Punk) and other punk weirdos, doing what they do best. Nugs from Yogurt Brain, Trashies, Sister Fucker, Straight Crimes, Grubs, and some others that I can't quite make out the names of because the artwork/listing is a hot mess, which is in tune with this tape. —Camylle Reynolds (Self-released)

VIOLENT MINDS: *Eyes of Death LP*

Blast after measured blast of midrange, no-bullshit thrash. It's steeped in the

'80s. There are even moments that recall the Exploited at their mid-career point, but they do without waxing too nostalgic and know to keep the anger well in evidence throughout. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

VOICE OF BLOOM: *Screams in Space: CD*

I must admit that I am not normally a fan of what I might call derivative subgenres of punk rock, i.e. pop punk, folk punk, and, yes, horror punk. I tend to dislike labels that put a specific sound in a corner. Well, color me surprised as this release might be of the horror punk variety and it pretty much rules. If I had to pin down a specific sound, it would be that of the *Walk Among Us*-era Misfits. Trust me, this is not a disparaging barb. Vocalist Evil Heim nails the Danzig thing so well. I daresay he actually might match ol' Glenn at his peak. This disc has six tracks that just breeze by, coaxing the listener to put the player on repeat and just keep listening. (Other than the opening track—which is a bit of a throwaway with no vocals other than some sampling-type stuff—every song gets better than the last.) Well done and totally enjoyable than it should have been. —Garrett Barnwell (Pyrrhic Victory, pyrrhiccivictoryrecordings.com)

VONKITT-KAMPFF: *"Victim of Desire" b/w "I Mathave in Love": CD single*

The two songs that comprise this cassette single are both solid tunes

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of dark punk. "Victim of Desire" is as upbeat and poppy as a post-punk song can be. It's smooth, fun dance number in the Joy Division vein. Speaking of those four British lads, both tunes draw heavily from the Ian Curtis-fronted project. "I Believe in Love" is the darker of the two tracks, reminding me even more of Joy Division than "Victim of Desire," especially with the deep tone of the vocals. This was a pleasant sonic surprise. —Kurt Morris (Deranged)

WAR GOES ON, THE: Self-titled: LP

The K-town punk scene once flourished with an impressive roster of heavy hitters including Gorilla Angreb, Amdi Petersen's Arme, No Hope For The Kids, Young Wasteners, et cetera. but appeared to be dormant for quite some time since those bands either broke up or became inactive. The War Goes On—which not surprisingly features former members of at least two of the aforementioned early scene participants—storm the gates in 2016 with eleven cuts of mid-paced, dark punk with that unmistakable Copenhagen sound. A lot more focused than some of their previous bands, The War Goes On seems to have their musical ducks (influences) in a row and are nailing them with effortless precision. Do you miss From Ashes Rise? Do you secretly wish Tragedy didn't bust out that nylon guitar so often? Give

these boys listen. —Juan Espinosa (Adult Crash / New Dark Age, no address listed)

WETBRAIN: Self-titled: 7"

If I heard this record blindly I would have sworn it was a reissue of some forgotten vintage Midwestern HC single lost in the back room of an Akron record store for past thirty years. There's nothing modern about this release except the references to very current subjects in the lyrics. This is a whirlwind of the Crucifucks and early Dicks oozing out of band of degenerates who clearly own *too many punk records*. For fans of Annihilation Time, Destroy All Art, half pipes, and trucker hats with sweat stains. —Ian Wise (Residue, residue-records.com)

WORKHORSE III, THE:

Closer in Relevance: CD

Heavy and riff-driven, Workhorse III is a supergroup from Philadelphia that features members of Limecell, Hellstomper, Savage 3D, and Lisa Christ Superstar. *Closer to Relevance* is their third full-length, and it does not disappoint. There's a metal influence here, although this is definitely more punk than metal, especially in terms of its general sensibility. There's a tinge of an almost stoner rock vibe on some of the tracks. The dual male-female vocals are fantastic, as is the production. Extremely catchy and well worth checking out, fans of

broad spectrum of punk and metal will enjoy the fuck out of this. —Art Ettinger (Self-released, workhorse3.bandcamp.com)

X = 5 Walls: LP + CS

X = (or X Equals, not quite sure) from Pennsylvania drum up a bevy of influences, although none of them are math metal or metallic hardcore as the artwork suggests. The first song kicks it into top gear, bringing to mind the dearly missed Government Warning, then quickly eases things into a more subdued yet still hardcore pace, much like California central coast veterans Agression and RKL. There's also a bit of a darker side explored, crossing post-punk and hardcore streams (the Estranged, Nervosas, et cetera). My earliest impression was that of a wanna-be Off!/Flag band but I'll admit these songs have grown on me since and new layers are revealed with repeated listens. The vinyl comes housed in a DIY spray paint and silk screened cover with an extensive screen printed lyric book and obi strip. This was given to me for review along with a separate cassette with equally elaborate packaging: a custom made tri-panel cassette sleeve held together with two nuts and bolts through the tape reels. These tracks appear to be demos but are strictly for reference, as the LP tracks are the ones you want to listen to. —Juan Espinosa (Self-released, exequals@gmail.com, exequals.bandcamp.com)

TACOPSAE: Gästezimmer: CD

To celebrate their twenty-fifth anniversary, these grind-meisters invited thirty different singers to come up with and record their own lyrics, which were in turn put on fifteen thirty-second songs, then split those up into male and female "sides." Pretty cool concept, actually. The results are, of course, a blur, and the whole thing zips by before you have a chance to blink. —Jimmy Alvarado (Power It Up)

YOUTH AVOIDERS:

Spare Parts: 7" EP

These French punkers lay waste to everything within ten miles of this 45 with four tracks of fist-pumping hardcore that's just dripping with hooks and a sound that is aggressive without being ham-fisted or meatheaded about it. Driving, catchy, scrappy, this'll do all right by ye, homes. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

ZOOMERS, THE:

Directly Contend: 7"

It's really satisfying to hear old gems like this come back to life. This originally came out in 1981, in Baton Rouge, La. The Zoomers have a Modern Lovers sound with more attitude and swagger. A great art record for any collector. —Ryan Nichols (Mighty Mouth Music, almostreadyrecords@live.com)





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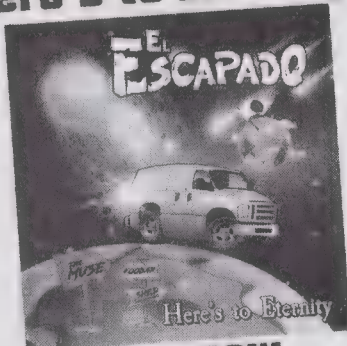
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to bands and labels that were reviewed either in this issue
or recently posted on razorcake.org.



- **12XU**, 3005 S. Lamar Blvd., D109-395, Austin, TX 78704
- **Adagio 830**, Marchlewski Strasse 107, 10243 Berlin, Germany
- **Alive / Natural Sound**, 919 Isabel-Unit G, Burbank, CA 91506
- **BD**, PO Box 1213, Livermore, CA 94551
- **Beach Impediment**, PO Box 26348, Richmond, VA 23260
- **Beer City**, PO Box 1759, Milwaukee, WI 53201
- **Bomb Pop**, PO Box 95008, Seattle, WA 98145
- **Burger**, 645 S. State College Blvd., Fullerton, CA 92831
- **Deathraid**, 3429 15th Ave. S., Seattle, WA 98144
- **Deranged**, c/o Gordon Dufresne, 2700 Lower Rd., Roberts Creek, BC V0N 2W4 Canada
- **Dirt Cult**, 7930 NE Prescott St., Portland, OR 97218
- **Dirtnap**, 5857 SE Foster Rd., Portland, OR 97206
- **Dirty Kills**, PO Box 273, Moncton, NB, E1C 8K9, Canada
- **Do What?**, 6819 Minnesota Ave., St. Louis, MO 63111
- **Don Giovanni**, PO Box 628, Kingston, NJ 08528
- **Fat**, 2196 Palou Ave., SF, CA 94124
- **Frantic City**, c/o Bart Fasseur, 31 rue Arvede Barine, 17000 La Rochelle, France
- **Frodis**, 2111 Brun St., Houston, TX 77019
- **Fucking Scam**, PO Box 273, Moncton, New Brunswick, E1C-8K9, Canada
- **Going Underground**, 1312 19th St., Bakersfield, CA 93301
- **Goner**, 2152 Young Ave., Memphis, TN 38104
- **Grafton** c/o Andi Camp, 3712 SE 8th Ave., Portland, OR 97202
- **Grave Mistake**, PO Box 12482, Richmond, VA 23241
- **Gunner USA**, 51 Lafayette St. #201, Salem, MA 01970
- **Gunner**, PO Box 105824, 28058 Bremen, Germany
- **HHBTM**, PO Box 742, Athens, GA 30603
- **Hibachi**, 497 Owego St., Painesville, OH 44077-4122
- **Hound Gawd!**, Kardinal-Galen-Straße 32, 47051 Duisburg, Germany
- **Hovercraft**, 300 NW 8th Ave. #401, Portland, OR 97205
- **IFB**, 4447 ST. Clair Ave. W., North Ft. Myers, FL 33903-5836
- **In The Red**, PO Box 50777, LA, CA 90050
- **Iron Eye** c/o Brett Sanderson, PO Box 1305, Cornwall, PE, C0A 1H0, Canada
- **Iron Lung**, PO Box 95521, Seattle, WA 98145
- **La-Ti-Da**, 1850 Mallard Dr., Courtenay, BC Canada V9N 8M2
- **Loud Punk**, PO Box 6115, Albany, NY 12206
- **Magnetic Eye**, PO Box 38005, Albany NY 12203
- **No Idea**, PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604
- **Not Like You**, 102 Richmond Ave. SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106-2214
- **Pecan Crazy**, 419 Burleson, San Marcos, TX 78666
- **Peterwalkee**, 299 West Delavan Ave., Buffalo, NY 14213
- **Pirates Press**, 1260 Powell St., Emeryville, CA 94608
- **Power It Up**, Zum Holzfelde 12, 31225 Peine, Germany
- **Prison** c/o Chris R., 835 Central Pkwy., Schenectady, NY 12309
- **Push And Pull**, 511 E. Edgewood, Springfield, MO 65807
- **Pyrrhic Victory**, PO Box 412, Lyndhurst, NJ 07071
- **Records Ad Nauseam**, 1443 N. Highland Ave., LA, CA 90028
- **Red Scare**, PO Box 13285, Chicago, IL 60613
- **Related**, 2134 E. Earll Dr., Phoenix, AZ 85016
- **Related**, 5326 S. Holt Ave., LA, CA 90056
- **Residue**, 2023 W. Estes Ave., Chicago, IL 60645
- **Rockstar**, Viktoriastraße 51, 52066 Aachen, Germany
- **Rumbletowne**, PO Box 663, Olympia, WA 98507
- **Saustex**, PO Box 691356, San Antonio, TX 78269-1356
- **Silber**, PO Box 883, Sanford, NC 27331
- **Slope**, 11430 N. Cave Creek Rd., Sunnyslope, AZ 85020
- **Slovenly**, 29 E Main St., 2nd Fl., Rear, Dallastown, PA 17313
- **Snappy Little Numbers**, PO Box 370602, Denver, CO 80237
- **Sownsbox**, 4510 Stevely Ave., Lakewood, CA 90713
- **Spaghetty Town**, PO Box 18343, Atlanta, GA 30316
- **SquidHat**, 848 N. Rainbow Blvd. #889, Las Vegas, NV 89107
- **SS**, 1809 S St. #101-276, Sacramento, CA 95811
- **State Of Mind**, 26 Cherry Pl., Huntington NY 11743
- **Tarantula**, 3510 W. Dickens, Chicago, IL 60647
- **To Live A Lie** c/o Will Butler, 2825 Van Dyke Ave., Raleigh, NC 27607
- **Tor Johnson**, PO Box 1556, Providence, RI 02901
- **Total Life Society**, PO Box 6592, Cleveland, OH 44101
- **Vinyl Conflict**, 324 S. Pine St., Richmond, VA 23220
- **Whoa Oh**, 6707 Yellowstone Blvd., Apt. 5H, New York, New York 11375-2386
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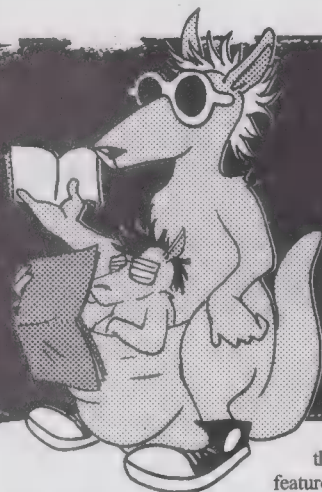
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- We will not review download card or a link to an album.
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- We know mail's expensive, but we send full copies of the zine as a thanks to all who send us material to review (if your postal address is provided).

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- Reviews may take six months. Be patient. We're bi-monthly and have reviewers worldwide.

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Reading *Doris* feels like
that breath that I'm able
to remember to take at the
end of a long day.

Tricia Ramos
DORIS #32

CABILDO QUARTERLY #10,

\$1, 11" x 14", copied, 2 pgs.

It's yet another issue of everyone's favorite two-page literary rag.

As usual, there is a mix of poetry and fiction—poems by Kat Georges, Robert Walicki, Katelyn Kenderish, and Saloni Kaul and fiction by Wred Fright and *Razorcake*'s own Mike Faloon. Highlights for me was Walicki's poem, "Closure" and Wred Fright's story that was a letter from a disgruntled worker to his former contact in Human Resources. Sure, the narrator is kind of a dick, but I enjoyed the way the tale ended. While not as strong as past issues, I still found some enjoyable work herein. And for a buck, you really can't beat it. —Kurt Morris (cabildoquarterly@gmail.com)

CHEAP TOYS #8, \$2, 6" x 4", 56 pgs.

Giz's *Cheap Toys* reads like *Cometbus* if half the issue happened to be in French. This issue—which I think is already a few volumes back in my writing—is part travelogue, part scene report, part music review sounding board, and part-obscure progressive history lesson. Although I had to skim over half the articles due to my inability to read more than a few French words, the articles in English were quite enjoyable. Perhaps my favorite section was the brief history and critical review of the methods of the Bread and Puppet Theater, a radical puppet theater troupe initially out of New York in the '60s, but is still around into the present. It felt very much like a punk take on some of the research that happens at the art history library I work at, so I may be a bit biased. The scene report out of Dubai was also interesting for putting a little light on a section of the world which does not immediately spring to mind as a breeding ground for any kind of underground scene (although the preponderance of Filipino-led bands covered leads me to believe that Dubai punk/metal scene may secretly be an outpost of Manila). I won't lie; a couple of the articles where kind of hard to read due to the "Google translate" style of broken English, but, overall, not a bad way to catch up on some punk goings on from abroad. —Adrian Salas (Giz, 7, rue mazagran, 13001 Marseille, France, xtramedium@laposte.net)

DECEIVED, THE #1, \$2 and a 9" x 12" SASE, 8½" x 11", copied, 20 pgs.

This zine is focused on the CIA's experiments with mind control through their programs like MK Ultra, Bluebird/Artichoke, and the sort. There's a piece (or reprint?) from Carol Rutz recalling her experiences with being experimented on as a child and the trauma she had from going through it. Then there's a poem from the editor, Sparrow, called "The Swastika Show," as well as a spread of punks wearing swastikas in the 1970s, and a reprint of claims and facts in regards to false memories. —Matt Average (PO Box 170204, SF, CA 94117)

DORIS #32, \$3.75 by mail or \$3 and two stamps, 5½" x 4", copied, 46 pgs.

Doris is a perzine of sorts. Part interviews, part therapeutic tips, part stream of consciousness. I get excited whenever there's a new issue. *Doris* reads like an advice column from a personal friend or like a letter that you've been waiting on for a long time, with updates from a person you're close to. This issue includes interviews with anarchists over forty, an interview with Marius Mason—trans Green Scare long-term prisoner—writing workshop exercises, some beautiful tips on how to be a good conversationalist, how to be happier, and life and death. Reading *Doris* feels like that breath that I'm able to remember to take at the end of a long day. —Tricia Ramos (Doris, PO Box 29, Athens, OH 45701, dorisdorisdoris.com)

DOWNPOUR #5, \$10, 5¼" x 8¼", 82 pgs.

An extremely well made punk zine out of Germany: small, perfect bound, and featuring good photography and nice paper (it looks and feels almost like an issue of *Hamburger Eyes* or *Wax Poetics*). I will say I would like it more if wasn't thirty interviews in a row with an interchangeable roster of white pop punk dudes. I

think the makers of this zine mean well, and it looks like the next issue will feature Martha, which is good. A punk zine in 2016 that makes an obvious effort towards inclusion and does not seem to offer a space for different voices is a little tone deaf and, frankly, misrepresentative of the punk scene at large. I guess I'll also say that! The accompanying 7", featuring a few of the bands interviewed in this issue, is melodic and anthemic and fine for what it is. I like the interview set during a whiskey tasting. I like the "bands identifying songs on a mystery mixtape" thing. I like the high quality paper stock and professional aesthetic. I want to know what they do next. —Matt Werts (downpourfanzine.de)

EARTH FIRST!, Fall, 2016, \$6.50, 8½" x 11", 88 pgs.

If you have heard anything at all about *Earth First!*, then you know all about this publication, their "Journal of Ecological Resistance." This zine is loaded with information about direct action and sabotage that goes on around the world in the name of protecting land, water, animals, and their habitats. This issue also includes a six-page interview with Tim Rusmisl, who I have heard speak a number of times at DIY shows in the Los Angeles area. His project, Proyecto Huella, does beach cleanup and sea turtle protection in Central America. It was great to see his face and his wonderful work mentioned in print. Also included are book and music reviews, poetry, and black and white photographs dedicated to saving our home planet and fighting against the assholes who seem hell-bent on destroying it. —Jon Mule (Earth First! Journal, PO Box 964, Lake Worth, FL 33460)

FATHER, THE, \$8 ppd., 5½" x 8½", copied, 20 pgs.

Huh. Interesting enough short story by Jakes Bayley about a Spanish priest dying of dysentery and how he, uh, time travels to a future California after ingesting some green powder a Native American dude blows up his nostril. Eight bucks is pretty steep for a chapbook, and of all the type variants in the world, why are we still using typewriter fonts? —Keith Rosson (Space Cowboy, 61871 29 Palms Highway, Shed SE, Joshua Tree, CA 92252)

FIRE PIT #1, \$4, 5½" x 8½", 63 pgs.

Fire Pit is a collection of poetry and short fiction from Eight-Stone Press in Baltimore, Md. In his introduction, editor William P. Tandy describes *Fire Pit* as, "A flicker of humanity seeking elusive definition against the dark and unforgiving night..." Who hasn't felt the darkness, the unforgiving? Who doesn't crave a flicker of humanity? There is much in this world to feel downright shitty and pissed off about, but a collection of writers and poets dedicating their time and effort to create "a flicker of humanity" is well worth celebrating. —Jon Mule (Eight-Stone Press, PO Box 347, Glen Arm, MD, 21057)

FLUKE #13, \$5, 5½" x 8½", offset, 68 pgs.

One of the coolest zines happening these days, and this issue marks twenty-five years of existence! This issue is a love letter to Arkansas punk, which is where this publication started. There are interviews with people who worked behind the scenes to make it happen, from promoter Fletcher Clement, to flyering with Colette Tucker. Then there are the folks who play, or played in bands: Andy Conrad (Numbskulz, Smoke Up Johnny), Colin Brooks (Numbskulz, Big Cats), and James Brady (Trusty). Then there's the piece from the legendary Tav Falco, a detailed play list from Mitchell Crisp, and a piece from the editor, Matthew Thompson, on his introduction to punk way back when. Reading through this, you will get a strong sense of community, the important role everyone plays in keeping their local scene alive, and how it affects what they do during and after. —Matt Average (Matthew Thompson, PO Box 1547, Phoenix, AZ 85001, fluke.bigcartel.com)

GET LOOSE! #6, \$2, 8" x 10", 7 pages (two posters), screenprinted

The reading content is short but sweet with some cartoons, an interview

with the band Holly Hunt, and a recipe. I'm partial to the Bum Wine Tour of Oakland Park, Fla. and a map full of annotations of what they drank and where they vomited. This the first issue *Get Loose!* since 1994, a gap that, if a person, could buy their bum own wine. So respect these ol' farts for keeping it real. Get loose, indeed! It's inspiring. Maybe I'll run out for some MD 20/20 and kick it old school myself. Best part? Movie reviews—a guy transcribing what his friend says watching movies. Of *Inglorious Basterds*, he says, "It's about a Jew that ruined Hitler's favorite movie." Indeed it is. With newsstand mag measurements and screen-printed on cardstock, its two sections are folded, opening up into rad, full-sized, illustrated posters, one with whimsical and wicked cartoonery and the other agitprop, demonizing the ol' familiar suit-and-tie guy. I enjoy the art zine as much as the next guy, but after a peruse, I always think, "Now what do I do with this?" Well, *Get Loose!* is a couple of posters disguised as a zine. Hang 'em on the wall, stupid! Mine also came with a screened D.O.A. poster (number seven in a run of sixty-five) for no real rhyme or reason, just pure awesomeness. And I got a bunch of stickers from Party Flag, whom I must now check out! *Get Loose!* made my day. —Craven Rock (infoforgepress.com)

HOT TAG #2, \$3, 5½" x 8½", 24 pgs.

This issue of Dan Nelson's wrestling zine covers his ill-fated attempt to make the leap from wrestling fan to aspiring pro wrestler. The succinct version of the story is that Nelson's attempt to prove himself to pro wrestler and coach DJ Hyde at the CZW Wrestling Academy results in a hospital stay for rhabdomyolysis, a.k.a. working out so hardcore that you start shutting down your kidneys with broken-down muscle tissue. That's a condition I did not even know existed, and am somewhat disappointed to have never been informed about by workout shirts with super-competitive, bro- slogans in all my trips to the gym (perhaps "Push it to the RHAB-zone" would be a good one?). Luckily, Nelson came out of the ordeal okay physically and only slightly worse for the wear financially

MINOR LEAGUES #1, \$2, 3½" x 5½", printed, 96 pgs.

A mix of prose, sketches, poetry, and memories, *Minor Leagues* reads like a diary from a person traveling in winter. The somber tone and mood of the book feels quiet, almost peaceful. The author manages to convey a real feeling from the lightly sketched drawings and comics inside. The vulnerable mood of the writing drew me in, and the light sketches kept me in. —Tricia Ramos (smoo-comics.com, smoo.bigcartel.com)

MINOR LEAGUES #2, \$5, 7" x 9", 88 pgs.

Minor Leagues is Simon Moreton's latest comic after SMOO, his zine of life stories and vignettes that ended last year. This new series is set in Bristol, England. We start with a funeral, float to a summer spent in parks, learn of Dizzy the cat's escape, and end up pondering a heron Moreton saw one night on a drunken walk. Sometimes I can't handle elliptical stories where I don't know who's coming and going or what's at stake. Yet, this narrative looseness works for *Minor Leagues* because the comics end up telling the story in a dreamy continuation rather than in neatly chopped segments. His loose style works with the understated drawings, which I love. In one of my favorite panels, Moreton is seated behind a couple in a pew at a funeral. Though his characters rarely have clear faces, he's wearing glasses, and the glasses frame covering his left eye is slightly larger than that of the right. It's a subtlety that conveys the curious wide-eyed look people get right before crying. I read SMOO because I love John Porcellino's *King Cat*. The illustration styles are similarly abstracted, and the pacing is similarly slow. The major difference is that Porcellino's comics seem to have a sharp start and close, like haikus or something, and Moreton's pieces flow and wander, which really does recreate the feeling of a year remembered. Some drink Pabst, some drink Old Style, some drink both. *Minor Leagues* is that tall boy of a zine that I need when American artists alone can't meet my craving for pint of life comics. Recommended reading! —Jim Joyce (smoo-comics.com, smoo.bigcartel.com)

Fluke is one of the coolest zines happening these days, and this issue marks twenty-five years of existence!

due to his luck at having health insurance. Still, the experience leaves him pondering how he ends up repeating cycles of over-exertion and comfortable stagnation without ever seeming to quite hit the golden balance, especially in the face of realizing that as a person in his thirties, he may quickly be aging out of his chance to get in the ring as something more than a fan. As someone who likes working out, but always feels a little put to shame by all the ultra-athletic muscle-gods in the crossfit videos who sneak into my Facebook feed with alarming regularity nowadays, I can quite appreciate the struggle Nelson talks about with figuring out how to keep persistently motivated in a way that doesn't burn one out in an initial fury of big intentions. —Adrian Salas (Dan Nelson, hottag.bigcartel.com, hottagzine@gmail.com)

HOT TAG #3, \$3, 5½" x 8½", copied, 24 pgs.

A gripping and emotionally affecting tale of a young person whose bond with friends in the wrestling fan world gets him through some serious personal problems. The editor Dan, and the subject JW Grizzle, tag team the story. Their to-the-point prose and clear love for wrestling and friendship give the story's centerpiece—a blow-by-blow of a wrestling role-playing game session—a surprising sense of action and emotional depth, as the friends find redemption in their imaginary and day-to-day lives. I never thought I'd be so touched by a scene where a guy stuck at home with a DUI tapes his phone to his fridge to record himself talking smack for a role-playing game, but here I am. —Chris Terry (Dan Nelson, hottag.bigcartel.com, hottagzine@gmail.com)

JELLY CAKE 1 & 2, \$2, 5½" x 8½", copied, 24 pgs.

A sci-fi story about a giant cicada attacking a post-apocalyptic city. This is more of a script than traditional prose, with big blocks of unadorned dialogue and sections divided into scenes. With no actors or cameras to add personality and description, it feels like its heart is missing. —Chris Terry (Benjamin Castle, PO Box 581412, MPLS, MN 55458)

PROOF I EXIST #26, \$4, 4" x 5½", copied, 94 pgs.

Billy's latest issue of *Proof I Exist* is a recounting of the tour his band, Rudest Priest, did from Albuquerque to New York City and back. It was a two-week journey that consisted of house shows, visits to family and friends, and the band getting some of their stuff stolen. Along the way were a lot of what you might expect on tour: some bad bands, some excellent ones, bonding with fellow bandmates (whom Billy introduces us to throughout the zine), and adventures to stores and local sights. There's a lot of content in this zine so it would've been tough to go in-depth in any of the scenes, but I felt that though sometimes I wanted Billy to get into more of what he was seeing and feeling instead of just a run-down of events. Perhaps focusing in on a few specific stories instead of trying to cover every event would've enabled him to do so. That being said, I always enjoy tour zines and this was no exception to that. Whether the band is well-known or just playing house shows, I always like reading of such adventures because I love traveling and enjoying the times I've been on tour. Billy's decision to introduce to his fellow band members was a good idea and something that too many tour zines fail to do. All in all, it's a solid read. —Kurt Morris (Billy, 432 Manzano NE, Apt. B, Albuquerque, NM 87108)

QUIT YOUR DAY JOB, \$3 or trade, 5½" x 8½", copied with giant removable sticker on back, 24 pgs.

Cartoon zines are definitely one of my favorites. This one features a majority of satire, American culture commentary, and toilet humor. The best jokes were the ones making fun of white people specifically, which instantly got a laugh from me. The author also included a second zine for review, called *White People Be Like...*, which was an awesome addition (also \$3 or trade, same address for ordering). The author's drawing style was a mixture of classic cartooning, hand style lettering, and, at times, reminded me of *Cracked* or *Mad* magazine. The back cover also features a giant removable sticker of the

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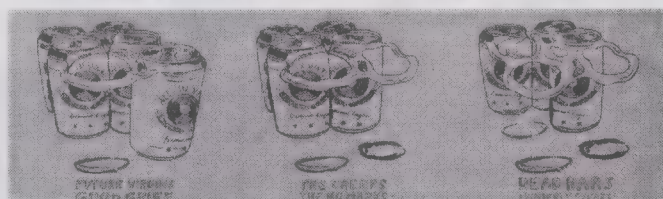


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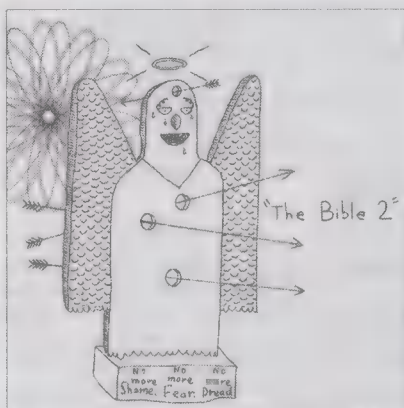


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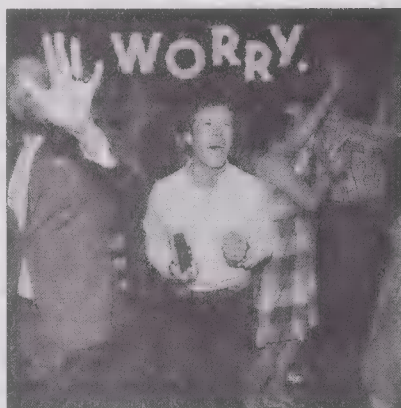
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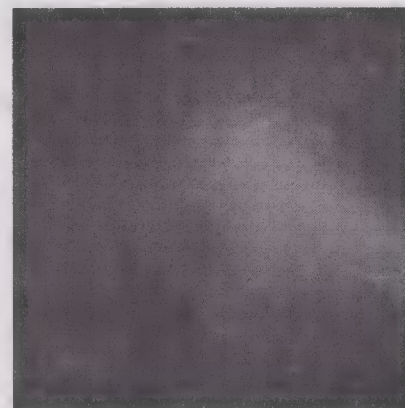
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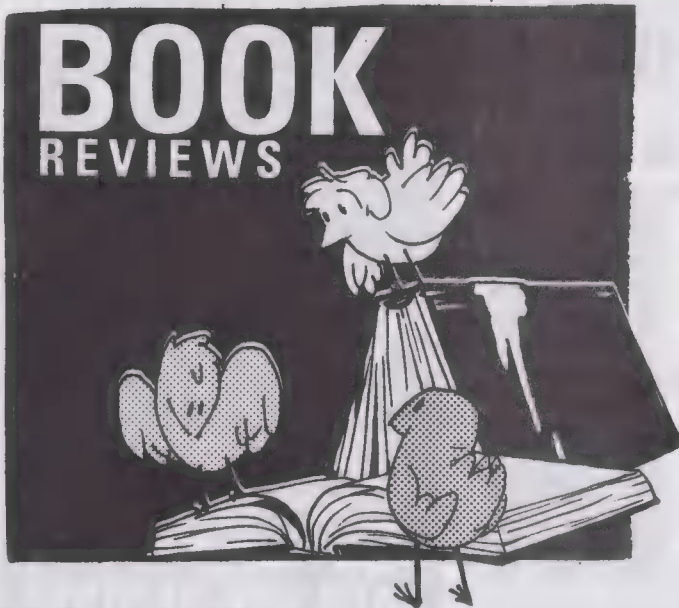


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BOOK REVIEWS



As You Were, Vol. 5: This Job Sucks!

Edited by Mitch Clem and Avi Ehrlich, 176 pgs.

Recently I was at a planetarium and the host asked the audience, "Who here wants to go to Mars?" A number of little kids yelled out, "Yay!" or "Me!" The host then asked, "Why might you want to go to Mars?" and I yelled out, "Because I hate my job!" Interestingly enough, even though I've always made decent money and had "professional" jobs most of my post-college life, I just dislike work. I am annoyed at being unable to do what I want when I want. I hate being told what to do, especially by inept managers.

That being said, the fifth volume of Mitch Clem's series, *As You Were* was made for people like me. The theme is "This job sucks!" and it's amazing the variety of tales that can come out of what might seem like a simple phrase. While most artists (Steve Thueson, Liz Boulduc, Steve

Bonnot Gang, The: The Story of the French Illegalists

By Richard Parry, 254 pgs.

The Bonnot Gang was a group—and "group" was a tricky word for these neo-anarchists—of illegalists best known as the first robbers to use a car as the main part of a getaway. They operated in early twentieth-century Paris. Inside that single city, one could have seen grandeur on a level of old-money Boston just a few miles (if that) from poverty that, though urban, was comparable to the most struggling areas of Appalachia. (I'm curious to learn how comparable to the tubercular alleys of that Paris was with the current Muslim areas in and around modern Paris.)

An illegalist is someone for whom breaking the law is its own ideology. While such an ideology doesn't seem completely unreasonable in this particular historical context, most of the illegalists and anarchists in this book make you think not of ground-level activists so much as Ayn Rand-revering putzes. Their economic circumstances vanish from the reader's mind as they live their lives according to "the unbridled I," as their favored philosopher Max Stirner phrased it. Which isn't to say that their gradient-varied philosophies—along with their in-fighting—doesn't make for compelling reading.

And for devoted readers of labor history, especially American readers under-read in European history, *The Bonnot Gang* offers a fascinating summary of the many Parisian strikes and riots of this post-Communist, pre-WWI era. A few of the paragraphs describe events of which I'd eagerly have read full chapters.

But this 254-page book has, by the author's count, nineteen principal characters, most of whom this reader had a too-difficult time distinguishing from one another. Once the book focuses on the police manhunt for the robbers, it becomes historical reportage, and if you've been unable to keep track of the characters before this point, there's no chance you will afterwards.

Originally published in 1987, the book is in its second edition. —Jim Woster (PM Press, pmpress.org)

Let's Go to Hell: Scattered Memories of the Butthole Surfers

By James Burns, 495 pgs.

I have been waiting for this book for a long time. Finally, the weird, untold legend of the Butthole Surfers will be known! Celebration in Weirldoville. It was the Butthole Surfers who first taught me that punk rock wasn't just about uniform chords and how fast you could play. They were also my introduction to the microcosm of Texas punk which still obsesses

A significant portion of the pieces focus on the grind of service work, and in almost every situation it shows the main character being at the beck and call of the public or the all-too-often useless managers.

—Kurt Morris | *As You Were, Vol. 5: This Job Sucks!*

Larder, etc.) take the common approach of bad jobs they've had, others (Jensine Eckwall, James the Stanton) go in directions where I'm not even sure what the hell they're talking about. (Don't worry. That's not necessarily bad.)

The styles of these punk artists range from clean and pop-influenced to dark and serious. Their stories run the gamut, too. Some are funny and winsome, while others are sad and reflective. That's wonderful, though, as it shows the wide range of feelings that various jobs can bring out. A significant portion of the pieces focus on the grind of service work—house cleaner, pizza maker, donut shop employee—and in almost every situation it shows the main character being at the beck and call of the public or the all-too-often useless managers.

One minor complaint: it would've been great if at the beginning of each comic the artist's name would've appeared. On occasion it did, but too often I had to flip to the table of contents to see who the artist was. That aside, this is certainly worth checking out, especially if you've been ground down by insufferable jobs and managers, as I have. The wide range of stories, artists, and styles means there's something in here for everyone. —Kurt Morris (Silver Sprocket, 1057 Valencia St. San Francisco, CA 94110)

to this day. It all came about at my friend Glen's house back in 1987 when he lent me his brother's copy of *Psychic... Powerless... Another Man's Sac*. It really changed my fourteen-year-old viewpoint.

From there I tracked down everything I could about these drugged-out Texans with their freak out live show—and their dog named Mark Farner—but the information was scant and stayed that way for decades. Now almost thirty years later, the story is being told.

The book is massive! Almost daunting, but once I got in, I found it easy to read with its narrative interspersed with quotes and stories from band members and those around them. Sadly, lead weirdo Gibby Haynes declined to be interviewed for the book, but the rest of the long cast of characters came out in droves and it still works. I know it would have been that much better with Gibby involved, but while reading I honestly didn't notice it.

The book covers the early days of Texas punk rock, where weird was king, hitting the road on an endless tour that encompassed the '80s, somehow beating all odds by getting first on a major label, then having a Top 40 hit, then their fade away in light of label hi-jinks and lawsuits.

The book's coverage of the band's lawsuit with long-time indie label Touch And Go was particularly interesting. At the time, the band was universally lambasted by the punk rock/alternative community for suing

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their former label, painting them as money-hungry corporate rockers. In the book, we hear it from the band's side, and it is safe to say that there was fault on both sides of the situation.

Perhaps the craziest part of the book is the discography. For a band that has never provided one shred of production information on any of their releases, the author has meticulously pieced together a comprehensive discography of who played what, on what recording, and what date each song premiered live. There is also a subsection of unreleased songs, demos, and live recordings. It is hard to imagine the work that would go into this for a band that had all of their information available, let alone the most legendarily-cagey-about-details band to walk the earth. Add in an abundance of great color and black and white photos from all eras, and I'd call this one of the most comprehensive band bios I have ever read. My only complaint is that you just gotta put the umlauts in Hüsker Dü. It's just wrong otherwise. —Ty Stranglehold (Cheap Drugs Publishing, outskirtspress.com)

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—Ty Stranglehold, *Let's Go to Hell: Scattered Memories of the Butthole Surfers*

No Flash, Please! Underground Music in Toronto 1987-92

By Derek von Essen and Phil Saunders, 255pgs.

I've never been to Toronto. It's way over on the other side of the country, and I have never had the opportunity to go. I have always been interested, and this book makes me want to go even more. The thing is, that this book encapsulates ■ time that has long gone. It was ■ fun time. It was my time. Even though I was the West Coast, it is clear through the photographs and stories in this book, that the punk rock scene in Toronto was a blast.

So many photos of so many shows! The bigger bands of the era interspersed with locals. There is an intimacy about it that brings back the memories of shows back then. It was ■ time when punk rock and hardcore were blurring into indie rock and alternative. Bands were touring like crazy and people were documenting it like never before. This book is a testament to the time and the city. Highly recommended. —Ty Stranglehold (Anvil Press, anvilpress.com)

Perfect Mix Tape Segue #6, The

By Joe Biel

Joe Biel founded Microcosm, a press and distro that have been ■ hub of the zine scene since the early 2000s. Joe is now *persona non grata* in his community, because he was emotionally abusive to his wife and to some people involved with Microcosm. While trying to understand and become accountable for his behavior, Joe was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, a high-functioning form of autism. People with Asperger's have difficulty with empathy, which makes it hard for them to have healthy personal relationships.

In this zine, Joe discusses how learning about Asperger's enriched his perspective on his past abuses. He shares the tools that he has learned in therapy that help him to (hopefully) be ■ better friend and partner. He draws connections between his abusive upbringing and unhealthy relationships ■ an adult. It's an informative, complex, and ambivalent read that raises more questions than it answers. How effective are accountability processes in radical communities? Is it possible to learn to authentically empathize? What can an abuser do in the present and future, since they can't change the past?

Biel says that people with Asperger's are mainly concerned with facts and information. Reading his writing, I can see that. The prose has a clinical tone, which strengthens the arguments being made. I learned a lot when I felt like Biel was writing in the abstract. If Biel was writing passionately about his frustrations, it would seem like he just had ■ axe to grind. And, in the few places where he does directly address dealing with his ex and the people that he says she has mobilized against him, I was reminded that this zine is ■ one-sided argument.

Ironically, the clinical tone that the bulk of the zine is written in—and the painstaking explanation of Biel's struggles with emotional health—gave me ■ sense of how difficult it might be to trust this guy with my feelings. In other words, in writing this, he was so thorough that he damned himself—I mean, if you know that someone's doctor gave them ■ “How to be caring” checklist, then how can you ever be sure that they aren't just checking boxes when they do something nice?

One of the most powerful passages is when Joe has an unrelated health problem and takes medication with ■ surprise side effect: it increases his empathy. He finds himself reliving certain fraught interactions, understanding why the other people were so hurt. It's a flash of genuine perspective, in the midst of pages and pages of one person's search for just that.

I found this entire zine fascinating and disturbing, and might read it again. Still, I wouldn't blame you if you didn't want to read it even once. —Chris Terry (PO Box 14332, Portland, OR 97293)

Please Destroy My Enemies

By Michael Sweater, 64 pgs.

This collection of comics by tattoo and comic artist Michael Sweater has me catching hints of Gary Larson's *The Far Side* subversive cute animal absurdism, Matt Groening's *Life in Hell* bone-dry deadpan, and bits of Bill Watterson's *Calvin and Hobbes* pre-adult philosophical inquiry. Sweater manages to make his usual choice of four or so panels count with enough biting humor to catch one's attention, but is also capable of experimenting a bit and expanding into a couple of succinct “multi-day” arcs when the urge moves him. Overall, ■ fun read for people who need some relatable weirdness in their lives. —Adrian Salas (Silver Sprocket, 1057 Valencia St., SF, CA 94110, silversprocket.com)

Prodigal Rogerson, The: The Tragic, Hilarious and Possibly Apocryphal Story of Circle Jerks Bassist Roger Rogerson in the Golden Age of LA Punk, 1979-1996

By J. Hunter Bennett, 95 pgs.

While the lengthy subtitle for this very short book is delivered in tongue-in-cheek fashion, it's ■ spot-on description of what the reader can expect. Delivered in ■ whimsical yet factually rigorous style, Bennett's book seeks to answer the question, “Whatever happened to Roger Rogerson?”

The Circle Jerks first bass player saw his role decrease and then disappear after a drug overdose that landed him in the Red Blanket Room, which inspired the Circle Jerks song of the same name. But where did he come from and, more importantly, where did he go? What prompted his return to L.A. where he would fatally overdose under mysterious circumstances in 1996?

Bennett uncovers all kinds of fascinating information about Rogerson whose peculiar lingo was as strange as it was infectious. When I was working on Keith Morris's book *My Damage*, the stories he told me about Roger sync up with what's presented in *The Prodigal Rogerson*. Bennett, however, goes much deeper into Rogerson's antics and chronicles his post Circle Jerks career, which included ■ stint in a band with Kristy McNichol's brother.

Bennett also presents never-before-published information about Rogerson's short and mysterious military career and the source of much rumor, innuendo, and speculation, much of it fueled by Rogerson.

A worthy footnote to an enigmatic career and a highly recommended read for both fans of the L.A. punk scene and Circle Jerks completists. —Jim Ruland (Microcosm Publishing, 2752 N Williams Ave., Portland, OR 97227)



***Damned, The—Don't You Wish That We Were Dead:* DVD**

Like the Sex Pistols, The Clash, Black Flag, and a handful of others, the Damned are one of those bands that one must have at least a working knowledge of if they intend to delve deeper than dipping their toes into the punk pool. Their influence cuts across punk's many subgenres and scenes (anyone knowledgeable about Los Angeles's scene can attest to the huge impact they had following their first visit to the city in the mid-'70s). Their oeuvre showcases one way a band can "progress" and make ever-sophisticated music yet not lose sight of where they started out.

Their tale is deftly recounted here by director Wes Orshoski—their formation out of the myriad proto-bands churning in the earliest days of the U.K. punk milieu, assorted career highs and lows, and the tenacity which has resulted in them being one of the last of the original wave still standing as their home scene enters its fifth decade.

Orshoski somehow manages to keep things moving at a quick pace while still allowing the lion's share of those who've shuffled through the band's many lineups get their piece in, as well as others who've drawn influence from them. He goes the harder—yet emotionally and historically honest—route of using the decades-long rift between original drummer

Rat Scabies and the rest of the band over royalty payments as an anchor for the second half of the film's narrative. It's an irreparable situation, says guitarist Captain Sensible, but Orshoski offers up both sides' version of the situation. It's used as an effective example of the complex, tentacled relationships that still shape the band. He also knows not to let it sour the overall tone of the film, which is true to the Damned's anarchic, messy, and still very funny *raison d'être*. As punk bio docs go, this is one of the better ones out there, and it also serves as a great crash course on the Damned, their history, and their music. —Jimmy Alvarado (MVD Visual, 203 Windsor Road, Pottstown, PA 19764)

***Ted and Brenda:* DVD**

Gosh, this is rough. It's a six-minute short film. I had trouble watching it since the filmmaker made the stylistic decision to drop a layer of corny fake film wear over everything, despite nothing in the plot that would merit such a choice. Nothing particularly retro or grindhouse about it. Basically, putting the string of clichés that is the dialogue aside (oh fun, telling the unconscious guy not to go anywhere. Never heard that one before), it's just a couple scenes of a guy and a girl getting ready for a date, except, surprise! the girl has a bloody knocked-out guy in her bathroom. The end. Oh yeah, spoiler alert: that's the whole movie. Sorry. —MP Johnson (TBR Video, twitter.com/TBRvideo)

The girl has a bloody knocked-out guy in her bathroom. The end. Oh yeah, spoiler alert: that's the whole movie. Sorry.

—MP Johnson, *Ted and Brenda*

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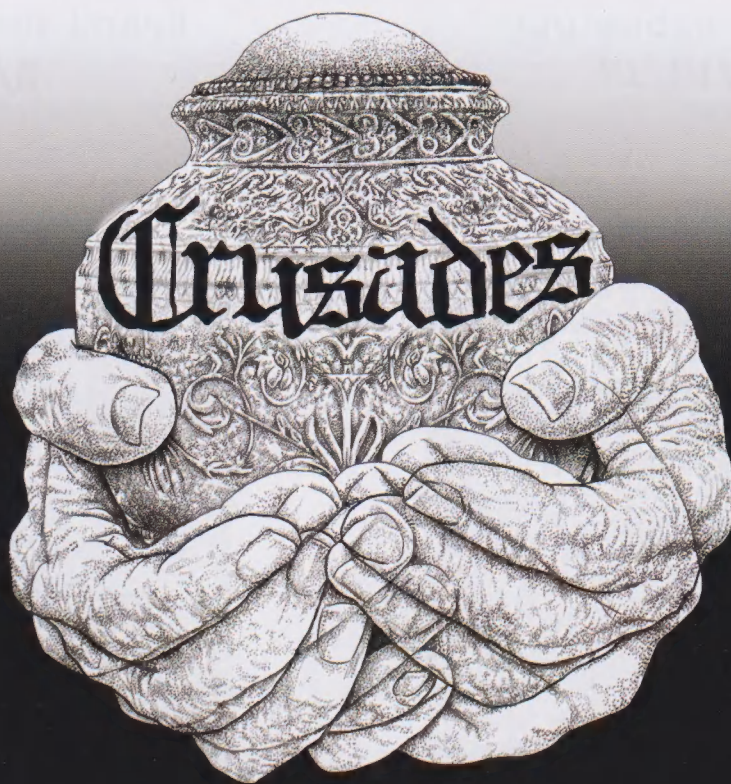


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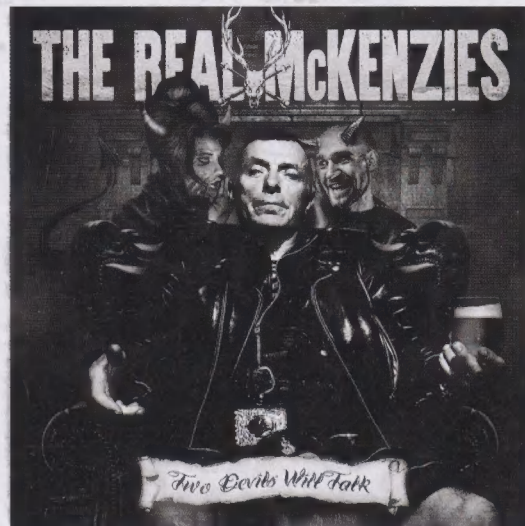
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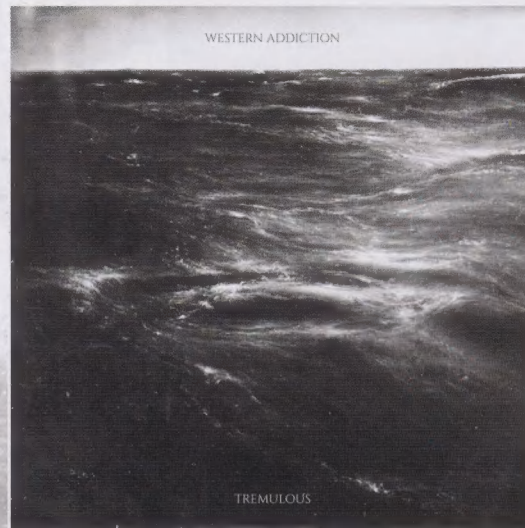
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Pedal Strike

Gnarly Charly: Vocal chords
Dirty: Bass
Ivan: Drums
OT: Guitar

Interview by Rene Navarro
and Daryl Gussin
Photos by Gabie Gonzalez
and Robert OldHCDude
Illustrations by Charly
Layout by Daryl

OLDHCDUDE

GABIE GONZALEZ

Pedal Strike

Gnarly Charly: Vocal chords
 Dirty: Bass
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Interview by Rene Navarro
 and Daryl Gussin
 Photos by Gabie Gonzalez
 and Robert OldHCDude
 Illustrations by Charly
 Layout by Daryl

This is L.A., not "L.A."
 Does that make sense?

This isn't television. This isn't Hollywood. L.A. punk that has received attention from major record companies. Pedal Strike is self-propelled. It is one of those rare examples of how it all comes together to shirk clichés. Community over competition. Full development of the mind and body. Their own shows, release their own albums.

*It seeps in
 I haven't
 myself. And
 it's punk th*

Rene: Where did your nicknames come from and are there others?

Charly: OT is also Turbo and Ivan is Peanut.

Rene: Turbo? What does that mean?

OT: That would be one that Charly gave me when we used to ride bikes a lot.

Charly: Turbo was good in the spring. And his name is OT, so we also called him Overtime from his OG punk days.

Ivan: I don't know how Peanut came about. I think it was just a reaction to calling Charly another nickname that he didn't like.

Daryl: What was the name he didn't like?

Ivan: It was Otter. [laughs] Yeah, he just picked something random to call me.

OT: I always thought it was because I would draw a peanut guy.

Ivan: I would draw him after that. I just took the name and went with it.

OT: High school days.

Dirty: Yeah, high school days. That's where "Dirty" came from, too. Mr. Zackarian, he would teach computers. This is when I first started practicing parkour with Charly. He came into class all dirty and he called me Dirty Dan and everyone laughed, and it just stuck. And now I just tell everyone it's for something else. [laughs]